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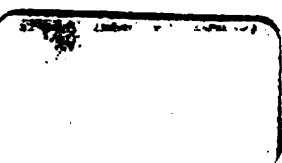
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(SCILLY ISLANDS)

WOODLEY





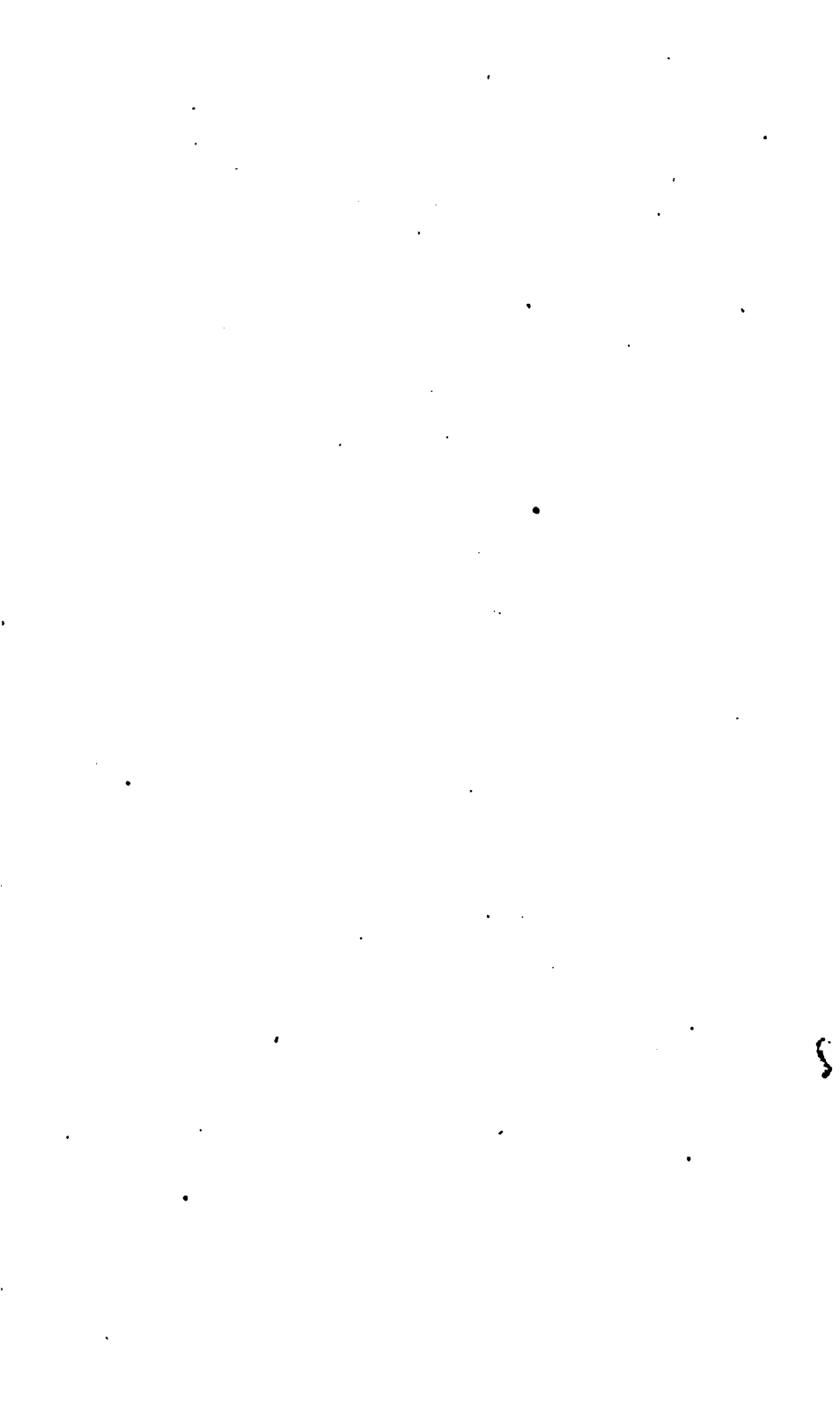


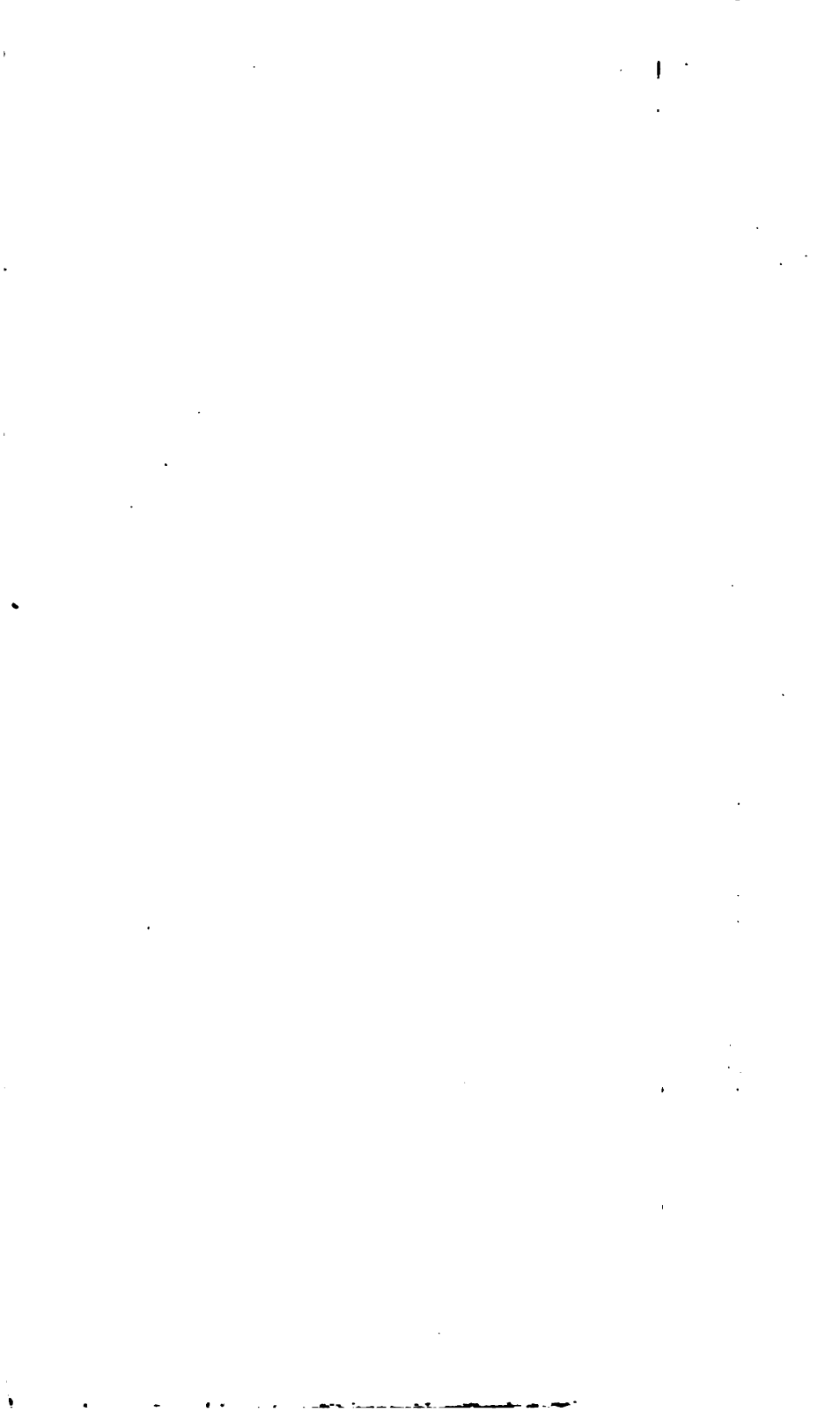


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**VIEW**  
**OF THE**  
**Present State**  
**OF THE**  
**SCILLY ISLANDS:**  
**exhibiting**  
**THEIR VAST IMPORTANCE TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE;**  
**&c. &c. &c.**





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A  
**VIEW**  
OF THE  
**PRESENT STATE**  
OF THE  
**SCILLY ISLANDS:**

EXHIBITING THEIR  
**Vast Importance to the British Empire;**  
the  
**IMPROVEMENTS OF WHICH THEY ARE SUSCEPTIBLE;**  
and  
**A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE MEANS LATELY ADOPTED FOR THE**  
**AMELIORATION OF THE CONDITION OF THE INHABITANTS, BY**  
**THE ESTABLISHMENT AND EXTENSION OF THEIR**  
**FISHERIES.**

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BY THE  
**REV. GEORGE WOODLEY,**  
*Missionary from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and*  
*Minister of St. Martin's and St. Agnes, Scilly.*

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**EMBELLISHED WITH AN ACCURATE CHART.**

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MORALITY PROMOTED, EDUCATION ESTABLISHED  
AND  
DISTRESS ALLEVIATED,  
TO AN IMPORTANT EXTENT, AMONGST THE INHABITANTS OF SCILLY;

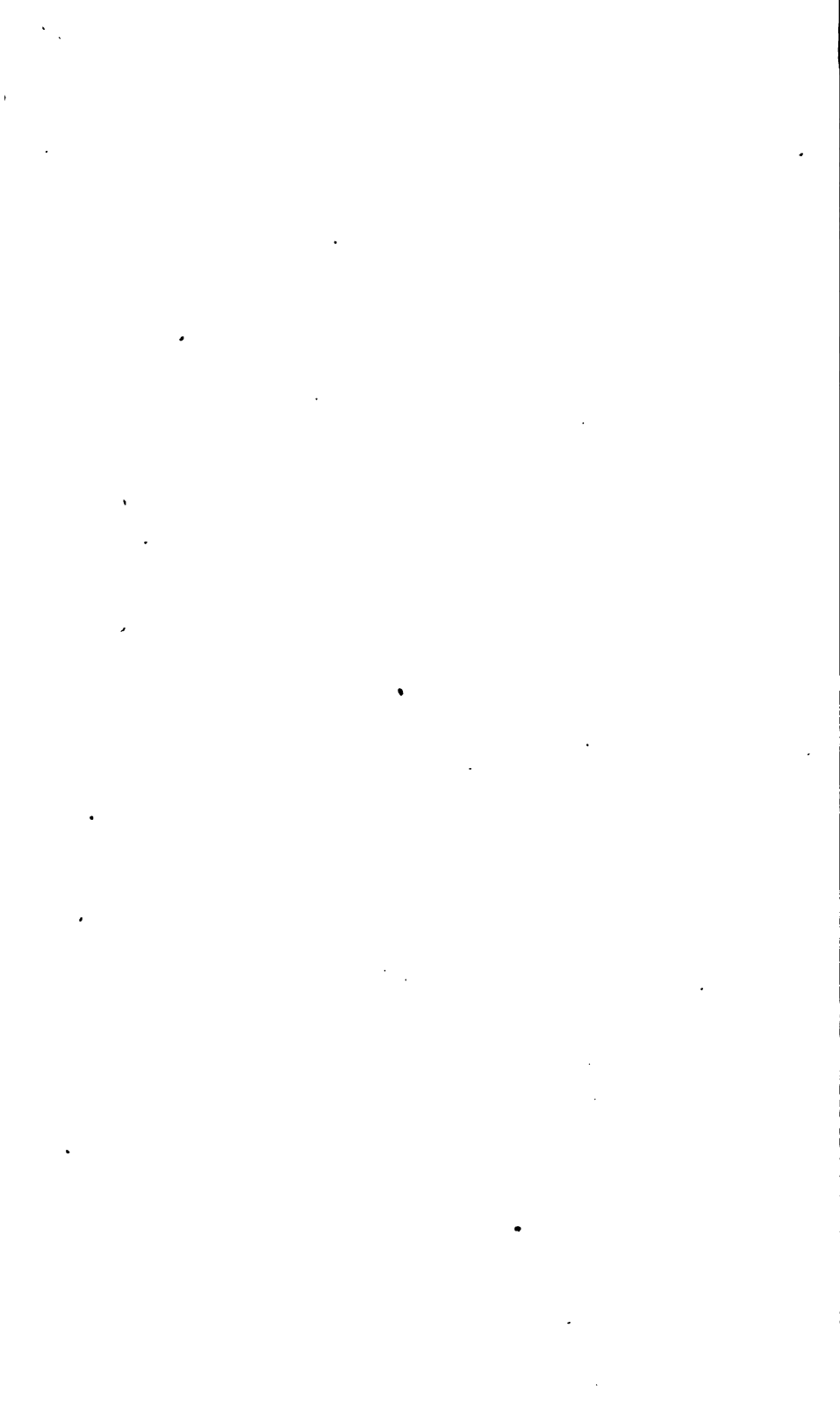
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**IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,**

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FAITHFUL, GRATEFUL,

AND  
OBEDIENT SERVANT,

**THE AUTHOR.**

*St. Mary's, Scilly*  
*June 1st 1822.*



## PREFACE.

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**WHEN** I first turned my thoughts towards the composition of the Work which is now submitted to the Public, I had no idea of the task in which I have found myself engaged in its progress. My chief object was to furnish a brief description of the present appearance and state of the Scilly Islands, and thus to contribute to the information of a few Friends, who were kindly anxious to know what means of improvement or amusement I might find in this remote corner of the Empire. It had, indeed, been suggested to me, before I left England, that a faithful account of these Islands had long been a *desideratum*, and could scarcely fail to meet success ; but I am too well versed in literary history to imagine that success is an invariable attendant even on works of much higher claims than are here

advanced. "The race," says the Wise Man, "is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill." Having been repeatedly solicited, however, as well by several Gentlemen of Scilly, as by letters from some to whose desires I owe respectful attention, to undertake this task, I have endeavoured, in the best manner in my power, to comply with their requests.

It will be observed that this work accomplishes much more than its title promises; yet I have retained the designation which I originally adopted, both because it is strictly applicable to the greater part of the book, and that other names which might have been thought more expressive of the nature of the publication, had been selected by preceding writers;—of a few of whom it is now necessary to take some notice, which may apologize for the appearance of the following sheets.

Of the various authors who have treated of the Scilly Islands, Heath and Troutbeck alone appear to have enjoyed the advantage

of an intimate acquaintance with their subject by residing for a considerable time on the spot. Some have been mere visitors,—winter swallows,—which just alight, and fly away. Others (who will be found sufficiently distinguished in the ensuing chapters, and whom, therefore, it is not necessary here to name) have been content to retail the accounts of preceding writers, and even to build hypotheses on data the correctness of which they had never ascertained !

Heath's book was published above seventy years ago (*anno* MDCCL.) It is entitled “ A Natural and Historical Account of the “ Islands of Scilly ; describing their situation, number, extent, soil, culture, produce, “ rarities, towns, fortifications, trade, manufacture, inhabitants, their government, laws, “ customs, grants, records, and antiquities,” &c. &c. &c. The author takes care to inform his readers, more than once, that he was an officer in His Majesty's Garrison at Scilly in 1744, “ where,” says he, “ I continued for a twelvemonth among the inhabitants, and lost no time in making my ob-

servations; and the result of what I there saw, and [of what] otherwise came to my knowledge, will appear by the following correct *Draught*, and faithful *History*."

The "draught" here alluded to is a chart of the Scilly Islands, which is certainly planned and executed in a judicious manner; the extracts of various grants and charters, which the author has made from the Tower Records, are valuable to the antiquarian and historian; but of the work at large it must be observed (how interesting soever it might once have been) that it has no claims whatsoever to scientific research, just proportion, or regular arrangement. The style is garrulous and common-place,—abounding with frequent abortive attempts at wit, and ridiculous conceits. The writer dwells with tedious minuteness on many trifles,—swells into bombast in describing real curiosities,—and passes over many interesting objects without the slightest observation. Thus his whole account of the Off-Islands is summed up in *nine largely-printed pages*, of which St. Agnes obtains nearly four, while St. Martin's

and Bryher are dismissed with not more than half a page each! But “Upnor Castle” in *Kent*!—(of which the author has given a *plate* as he resided there when his book was published)—is celebrated in a *note* running through *nine pages*, and containing twice as much matter as the writer has bestowed on all the Off-Islands of Scilly! His work consists of 456 pages, of which, however, only 240 (or little more than one half) can be said to relate to Scilly,—the greater part of the remaining portion being “a description of Cornwall”! In a word, Heath’s Account may be read once for curiosity, but will never be referred to with pleasure. He possessed very few requisites to form an agreeable and instructive writer; it is not to be wondered at, therefore, if his readers are not numerous, and his admirers are still more scarce.

Troutbeck was, for many years, Chaplain of the Island of St. Mary’s, and had excellent opportunities for becoming acquainted with every thing connected with the work which he undertook to write, and he so far



embraced those opportunities as faithfully to give the dimensions of "a hole for fixing a flag-staff,"<sup>a</sup> with several other "*curiosities*" of the like nature. His book, which has no date, but which appears to have been compiled about the year 1794, is entitled "A Survey of the Ancient and Present State of the Scilly Islands: describing their situation, *towns*, forts, produce, government, customs, antiquities, number, churches, harbours, language, arts, manufactures, *house-burnings*!, extent, castles, soil, religion, traffic, grants, shipwrecks,"<sup>b</sup> &c. &c. &c.—"A work," it is added, "very necessary for such sea-faring people as come near the dangerous rocks of Scilly, and *entertaining to all degrees of readers*!"

Troutbeck, certainly, not only describes every thing that he saw, but also relates

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<sup>a</sup> See his "*Survey*," p. 85.

<sup>b</sup> Whether this strange *jumbling* is to be attributed to Mr. Troutbeck or his printer, I know not: The words, however, stand in three columns on the title-page, and the results are as above expressed.

every thing that he heard, respecting Scilly, with equal minuteness and precision, whatever might be the object of his attention. But his language is even more familiar and inelegant than that of his predecessor. There is no arrangement,—no division of books, chapters, or sections: It is all a “*rudis indigestaque moles*” of ill-assorted facts, crude narratives, and dry details; embracing not only the name of every rock and ledge around the Islands, with directions to mariners for avoiding them; but also his own private squabbles with the resident agent of the Duke of Leeds! and *eked* out with the proceedings and correspondence of the Court of Twelve, at St. Mary’s. He has also inserted an article “*Of History*,” extending to above ten pages of small newspaper print, and the whole of which is taken from Heath, *verbatim*, without the slightest acknowledgment or reference. Indeed Troutbeck’s plagiarisms are the most numerous and barefaced that I ever knew; not being confined to single sentences, or detached paragraphs, but, in some instances, extend-

ing to the appropriation of whole pages to the purposes of his own "Survey." The book consists of 234 pages, badly printed, on a coarse bluish paper; the type, in the last 60 pages, being extremely small and scarcely legible.

Dr. Borlase's work on the Scilly Islands is a learned and valuable production; but more suited to the philosopher and antiquarian than to the general reader, by whom, indeed, it is scarcely known. As I have had occasion, more than once, to refer to that publication in the course of the following pages, this brief notice of it may suffice for the present.

Of the volume now offered to the world, I have but little more to say. Of the arrangement and execution, the Reader will judge for himself: But I may be allowed to state that its imperfections,—of whatever nature,—are rather the results of insular privation of literary resources and conveniences, than of negligence or inattention. If I have shewn that the Scilly Islands are really of great national importance, and have pointed out the means by which they might be much

improved, I hope I may venture to claim some share of indulgence and attention. In the descriptive parts I confidently believe that no material error or omission will be found. It should, however, be observed, that even during the period when the following sheets were passing through the press, some slight changes occurred at Scilly, which would scarcely deserve notice here, were it not to anticipate the objections, and blunt the shafts, of puerile malice.\* Of the whole work I have only to add, that I have seen for myself the various places which I have attempted to delineate; and that I have endeavoured, by reflection, observation, and enquiry, to form a correct judgment of the subjects on which I have ventured to offer an opinion. Having no other object in view than the statement of facts, for the benefit of

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\* Among those changes may be noticed the secession of one of the packets,—the removal of the bell of Star Castle to St. Agnes Church,—the abandonment of the new kelp manufactory at Tresco,—some improvements of the roads at St. Mary's, &c. &c. &c.

my country, the gratification of my Readers, and the advantage of the people amongst whom Divine Providence has placed me; I tranquilly leave the volume to its fate.

G. W.

# **C O N T E N T S.**

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### **CHAP. III.**

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CHAP. II.

Of St. Martin's Island, Teän, and St. Helen's.

CHAP. III.

Of Treaco Island.

CHAP. IV.

Of Bryher, Samson, and Scilly.

CHAP. V.

Of St. Agnes' Island, and the Western Rocks.

## LIST OF

# AUTHORS AND WORKS

QUOTED OR REFERRED TO IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Alexandrinus, Dionysius, p. 29.                    | Macculloch's <i>Western Isles of Scotland</i> , 118, 192.        |
| Avienus, Festus, 24, 26.                           | Moses, 19.   |
| Borlase, (Dr.) 32, 66 <i>et seq.</i> 199.          | —— Chloronensis, 21.   |
| <i>Chronicles</i> , Book of, 22.                   | Phelps <i>On the British Fisheries</i> , 144.                    |
| <i>Complete System of Geography</i> , fol. 33, 63. | Pliny, 25.   |
| Cuvier's <i>Theory of the Earth</i> , 244.         | Pryce, (Dr.) 31.   |
| Ezekiel, 24.                                       | Solinus, 22, 56, <i>et al.</i>                                   |
| <i>Guide to Mount's Bay, &amp;c.</i> 185.          | Sonini's <i>Travels</i> , 25.                                    |
| Halley, (Dr.) 2.                                   | Strabo, 22, 29, 35.  |
| Heath, 37, 90, <i>et al.</i> freq.                 | Stukely, (Dr.) 28, 32.   |
| Herodotus, 22.                                     | Tacitus, 28.   |
| Homer, 25.   | Tanner, Abp. 36.   |
| Isaiah, 24.  | Troutbeck, 55, <i>et al.</i> freq.                               |
| Leland's <i>Itinerary</i> , 36, 63, <i>et al.</i>  | Tucker's <i>Report on the Scilly Islands</i> , 9, <i>et seq.</i> |
| Lowth, 24.   | Volney's <i>Travels</i> , 20, 180.                               |
| Mackay's <i>Navigator</i> , 3.                     | Whiston, 21, 320.  |
|  | Whitaker, 21, 23, <i>et al.</i>                                  |
|  | Whitelock's <i>Memorials</i> , 15.                               |





VIEW  
OF THE  
PRESENT STATE  
OF THE  
SCILLY ISLANDS.

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**Part I.**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

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CHAPTER I.

*Geographical Position of the Scilly Islands.—*

*Their Bearings and Distance from the nearest Head-lands of England, France, and Ireland.—Their general Appearance, Number, Extent, Dimensions, and Population.—Their Importance to Great Britain demonstrated, from a variety of Considerations.—Analysis of the Report of the Surveyor General of the Duchy of Cornwall on the Improvement of the Roadsteads at Scilly; with Remarks, obviatory of popular prejudices, and elucidatory of the subjects contained in the Report.*

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**THE SCILLY ISLANDS**—(more commonly, though vaguely, known under the general name of *Scilly*)—are situated at the entrance of the British and Bristol Channels, which are first

separated and distinguished by their interposition. They lie in latitude 49 degrees, 57 minutes, North; longitude 6 degrees, 43 minutes, West; bearing about West-by-South from the Land's End; due West from the Lizard; North-West from Ushant; and South-East from Cape Clear. They are distant from the latter place, 51 leagues; from Ushant, 34; from the Lizard, 17; and from the Land's End (whence they may be seen by the naked eye, on a clear day) between 9 and 10 leagues. From London, their distance is 320 miles.\*

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\* Although it is not intended, in this work, to follow the examples of *Heath* and *Troutbeck*, by inserting a variety of articles connected merely with the local navigation of the Isles, and therefore wholly uninteresting to the general reader; yet it may be remarked, as an observation of the accurate Dr. Halley, that in the charts extant in his time, they were laid down too far Northerly; in some instances, full 50 deg. 10 min. This, as he adds, was not without a good effect so long as the magnetic variation continued Easterly; but since it became Westerly, as it has been from the year 1657, ships steering in Easterly by the compass, get the variation to the Northward of their true course, which may expose them to mistakes and danger, especially if Scilly be reckoned in or above 50 degrees. He contends that the in-draught of St. George's Channel is not sufficient to occasion these accidents; and therefore advises masters of ships coming into Channel to "steer on a course as much to the Southward of the East, as the variation, at any time, is Westerly; which will exactly keep their parallel. And also that

Soon after leaving the Land's End, the shadowy forms of the Islands are seen, apparently combined in one long low line, stretching on the verge of the horizon like a slight cloud. *St. Martin's Head*, (the Northernmost point of the Islands, on which is a white day-mark) is first perceived; but the Isles and rocks lie in such clusters, that the divisions and channels between them can only be discerned on a near approach. These groups shift their forms continually, according to the different points of view in which they are contemplated. At the distance of ten or twelve miles, the Islands appear in one connected mass, yet with numerous abrupt ridges; but, seen from each other, the Islands of St. Mary's, St. Martin's, and Tresco, seem nearly level at top, and about the same height, their head-lands being terminated by *carns* or piles of rock.

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they come out of the ocean on a parallel not more Northerly than 49 deg. 40 min. which will bring them fair by the Lizard."

I have only further to observe on this head, that although Heath, agreeably to Halley's suggestion, has laid down St. Mary's Castle in lat. 49 deg. 55 min. and St. Agnes' Light-house in 49 deg. 53 min. 30 sec.; more recent and more accurate observation has fixed the former in the situation mentioned on the preceding page; and St. Agnes in lat. 49 deg. 54 min. N.; lon. 6 deg. 19 min. W. (See *Mackay's Navigator*.)

St. Mary's gently diminishes towards its Southern and Northern extremities : The *Hugh*, being separated from the main part of the Island by a broad pool or bay on each side of a low neck of sand, looks like a contiguous Isle. St. Agnes, Samson, and Bryher, in every direction, have a very irregular and hilly appearance. There is nothing engaging in the general aspect of this British Archipelago : Rugged ridges, utterly destitute of trees ;—their sides tinted with a dull brownish hue of scanty vegetation ;—their bases streaked by long and broad beaches of white sand, or darkened by sombre rocks of every variety of size and form ;—such are the prominent features of the Scilly Islands. The Eastern Isles are uninhabited ; and but few houses, or other works of man, being visible on the other Islands as seen from St. Mary's Road, the general appearance is certainly dreary and uninviting. The stranger is, therefore, somewhat agreeably surprized, on entering the Pool, at finding a harbour, quay, town, and garrison, with such other objects as the eye has been usually accustomed to contemplate in a small sea-port.

Scilly consists of *six principal Islands*, all of which are inhabited ;—*eleven smaller Islands or Isles*, each containing from ten to eighty acres ;—*twenty one Islets*, containing from one to nine acres respectively ; and an immense num-

ber of rocks, apparent or sunken, some surrounding the Islands,—others endangering the navigation of the Sounds,—and others stretching away, under every diversity of scopulous proportion; above four miles into the Atlantic Ocean, to the great peril of vessels which may approach too near in stormy weather.

The whole quantity of land on the Islands is about 4600 acres, more than half of which are capable of cultivation, as will be shewn in a subsequent chapter.

The names, dimensions, and population of the Islands, in the present day, are as follow :

### SIX PRINCIPAL ISLANDS.

NAMES.	ACRES.	POPULATION.
St. Mary's .....	1640, .....	about 1400
Tresco .....	880, .....	480
St. Martin's .....	720, .....	280
St. Agnes' .....	390, .....	282
Bryher .....	330, .....	140
Samson .....	120, .....	34
	<u>4080</u>	<u>2616</u>

### *Eleven Smaller Islands.*

NAMES.	ACRES.	NAMES.	ACRES.
St. Helen's.....	80	Great Ganilly .....	20
Teân.....	70	Great Gannick .....	18
White Island (near St. Martin's).....	50	Crebawithen*.....	22
Annet .....	50	Melledgan* .....	20
Great Arthur.....	30	Gorregan* .....	20
		Rosevean* .....	16

*Twenty One Islets.*

NAMES.	ACRES.	NAMES.	ACRES.
Minewithen .....	15	Pednathise.....	7
Norenour .....	13	Inaswiggick .....	8
Mincarlo .....	12	Little Ganilly.....	6
Rosevear* .....	12	Little Gannick.....	5
Camperdeney .....	10	Ragged Island* .....	5
Guahall (or Gweall)...	10	Innisvouls .....	4
Northwithel.....	9	Round Island* .....	3
Toll's Island.....	7	Maiden Bower.....	3
White Island (near } Samson's)..... }	7	Penbrose .....	2
Little Arthur .....	7	Great Crebinack .....	2
		Scilly* .....	1

Those places distinguished in the preceding lists by an asterisk (\*), are so full of rocky eminences as to be utterly incapable of cultivation. Many of the other Islets are so small, and lie at such a distance from the principal Islands, as to be also wholly useless. The rest bear a short coarse grass, and are fit for feeding cattle in Summer; when a few families visit them for some weeks, for the purpose of cutting sea-weed for kelp.

The whole circuit traced by the Islands and rocks of Scilly amidst the interfluent seas (*Pednathise* being the Southern point; *the Crim* rock, the West; *Biggall*, the North-West; *White Island*, near St. Martin's, the Northern; and the *Hinjack* rock the Easternmost point) is about ten leagues. The circuit described by the inhabited Islands is six leagues.

Unknown as these Islands have so long and generally been to persons in England, the neglect which they have experienced is hardly a matter of wonder; yet *how* that ignorance could have prevailed to so great an extent, is indeed astonishing! Comparatively speaking, but few persons, even of the adjacent country, have ever visited them; and of those few, the chief part had generally no other object in view than the hasty gratification of an idle curiosity, or the implicit pursuit of the calls of business, which left neither leisure nor inclination to make one remark,—to glean one fact,—that might tend to the advancement of science or the advantage of the Empire. To merchants and sea-faring people, of every part of Europe, the name of *Scilly* has always been a sound of fearful import, and almost synonymous with destruction:—It must be confessed that the annals of naval disaster, especially in former years, have been but too pregnant with instances to justify those apprehensions of the uninformed respecting the *Scilly Rocks*. On the other hand, it is capable of demonstration to men of enlarged and judicious minds, that the Islands of Scilly, in almost every point of view, are calculated to be of great importance to the mother country, which they already defend in a considerable degree from the most violent storms, and which they might also be



made an efficient means of protecting from the approach of an enemy; besides contributing, in no small proportion, to augment the industry and resources of the Empire. Of this latter subject I shall treat in a subsequent chapter;—closing the present with an exposition of some of the improvements of which Scilly is susceptible, for the advantage of commerce, and for the successful prosecution of wars.

*St. Mary's Road* is formed by *St. Mary's* and the *Eastern Islands*, on the one side, and by *St. Martin's*, *Tresco*, *Bryher*, and *Samson's*, with several smaller, intermediate, Islands, on the other. It is about four miles in length, and from one to two and a half in breadth, in which are from 2 to 7 fathoms of water, with very good holding ground. There are also two good, though small, harbours, on the North-East and West sides of *Tresco*, called *Old* and *New Grinsey* (*vulgo* Grimsby) and other convenient anchorages, of easy access. Even in their present state, these places have often afforded protection to from two to three hundred sail of merchantmen, and others, including men of war, and even line-of-battle ships, which have been driven in here by the prevalence of strong Easterly winds. If properly improved they would shelter a much larger number, and would be found, in time of war, a most eligible station for a royal squadron. Scilly being situated at

the Westernmost extremity of the British Channel, and thus out-flanking Ushant, the North-Western extremity of France;—lying also in a direct line between that place and Cape Clear;—frigates could sail hence with any wind, to intercept a hostile squadron,—to protect the home trade, and to sweep those seas of privateers, which have hitherto been so destructive about the entrance of the Channel. Vessels stationed at Plymouth, or even at Falmouth, would not be able to move for these purposes during the prevalence of winds from the Southward and Westward. During the late war, Sir Edward Pellew, now Lord Exmouth, commanded a small squadron of frigates and brigs on this station; and I have reason to believe that his discerning eye was well aware of the improvements of which it was capable; and, about ten years since, Mr. Tucker, Surveyor General of the Duchy of Cornwall, was ordered to make a Report (which I have now before me) on the same subject. Much, very much is it to be regretted, for the sake of the Islands and the country, that further measures were not adopted; and that Scilly was not made,—what it is so well qualified for,—*a still more safe and extended Roadstead, and a permanent Naval Depot*; where vessels of war, on the Channel or Irish station, might be promptly repaired and supplied with stores on an emer-

gency, without the inconvenience and delay of proceeding to a more easterly haven.

In the "Report" before alluded to, in which the obstacles and facilities attendant on the maritime improvement of Scilly are very justly exhibited, the author, with great propriety calls these Islands "the advanced work of the great natural fortification of our sea-girt shores." He states that the proposed object of their improvement can be fully accomplished, and with less difficulty and expence than, from its immense magnitude and importance, might have been calculated. Having shewn and substantiated the disadvantages of Torbay, Plymouth, and even Falmouth, as places of rendezvous for vessels bound to the Westward, (although it must be owned that the latter port possesses considerable superiority, in this respect, over the other two) Mr. Tucker proceeds to point out the advantages of Scilly as a maritime outpost. He attributes the neglect which the Islands have experienced, to the prejudice arising from some heavy naval disasters, particularly the loss of three ships under Sir Cloudesley Shovel, in 1707. As a preservative against the fear arising from a consciousness of the *presence* of rocks and other local dangers, he states the strong fact that in each of the ports of London and Liverpool, more vessels are annually wrecked, after the com-

pletion of their voyages, than on the *tremendous* rocks of Scilly! He observes that the anchorage at Scilly would not at present contain more than five sail of the line and two hundred merchant vessels, in the different harbours; but adds that, by building two Moles, or Breakwaters,—(the one nearly midway, and in a curvilinear form, in the *Broad Sound*, between St. Agnes and Samson's;—the other nearly in a straight line, projecting from the *Gugh* of St. Agnes to the Spanish Ledge, in *St. Mary's Sound*)—there would be ample room for ten or twelve sail of the line; a much greater number of frigates; and five hundred sail of transports or merchant vessels. “The advantages,” he observes, “which the country would derive from a rendezvous so far to the Westward as to admit of convoys and expeditions profiting of so many points of the most prevailing winds in the entrance of the Channel for six months in the year, *during which they could not sail from ANY PORT in the Channel*, are incalculable.”

“The tide” (Mr. Tucker observes, after Mr. Spence, to whose accurate chart and soundings of Scilly he unites with all well-informed men in doing justice) “does not, under any circumstance of wind and weather, either at flood or ebb, set upon any one of the rocks or islands from the sea, but forms a complete circle round the groupe of the Islands.”

In order to obviate an objection that might arise from the scarcity of water in Scilly, Mr. T. observes that squadrons and convoys should not be at a loss on their voyage out: He recommends, however, that tanks should be constructed upon the Islands, as at Gibraltar; or that tank-vessels, such as are used at Jamaica, should be employed to bring water from Penzance and St. Ives. — With regard to this suggestion, I would observe that before so great an expence should be incurred, it certainly would be desirable to try the experiment of clearing some of the old *wells*, and sinking new, in the different Islands. Several of those at St. Mary's are never dry.

The highest estimated expence of building the two proposed piers or moles, is two millions, ten thousand pounds.<sup>b</sup> This calculation is made upon the same data as were taken for the break-water in Plymouth Sound; though, from the immense blocks of granite (from fifty lbs. to ten tons weight) abounding on every Island, and which may be quarried to the beach, — the expence would be considerably reduced, and the work facilitated. The freight for the transports employed in war time in His Majesty's service, exceeded £ 250,000 per month: Taking into account the saving of time — (one-

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<sup>b</sup> Perhaps *two-thirds* of the above sum would be fully adequate to every just expence.

tenth,)—and consequently, of the amount of freight—( £ 300,000 per annum ) which would result from transports being freighted at Scilly, instead of in the river, the expence of the whole works would be saved in seven years of war: Mr. Tucker, however, proposes, towards defraying the expence, a small impost upon tonnage, (foreigners to pay double;)—the re-purchase of the lease of the Islands from the Duke of Leeds;—and the employment of convicts, on this truly-national undertaking.

The Report is corroborated by some naval officers and skilful pilots resident on the Islands.

In a paper by two able engineers, appended to the above document, it is estimated that the completion of the proposed works would require seven years;—that the Western break-water would need four million and ninety-nine thousand tons of stone; and the other, six hundred, thirty five thousand, and forty tons; making a total of four millions, seven hundred and thirty thousand, and forty tons, to be cast into the sea for these important works.

Having thus shewn, from my own observation and the accurate calculations of scientific men, how valuable those Islands and roads might be made to Britain, by the fostering care of Government (although much more remains to be added on this subject under another head;\*)

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\* See chap. vi. Part I.

I shall only briefly notice, how seriously detrimental they would be to the commerce of the United Kingdom, if ever they should fall into the hands of the enemy;—a disaster from which the present state of their *military* works is by no means an absolute guarantee!<sup>d</sup>

As a proof that there is nothing chimerical in the idea of a successful descent of a hostile force on these Islands, and of the great annoyance, if not utter destruction, of the trade from all ports in St. George's Channel to those in the British, which might be occasioned by that circumstance,—it may be sufficient to mention that, during the unhappy civil wars, the Royalists, by putting Scilly in as good a state of defence as their means afforded, and by fitting out privateers, occasioned such losses and complaints both to English and Dutch merchants, that a Parliamentary expedition, under Admiral Blake and Sir George Ayscough, was sent to reduce those "*pirates*," as they were termed by the Commonwealth's men! This was effected, as will be more particularly detailed hereafter,\* and it was even then observed that "the Scilly Islands are the key that open a passage to several nations;" and, that "these Islands would be a shelter to merchants, which before were their ruin," and had been "a

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<sup>d</sup> See chap. i. Part II.

\* See chap. ii. Part I.

check to the trade of many nations.”<sup>f</sup> If the reduction of St Mary’s was effected when it had a garrison of “eight hundred soldiers, and officers enough to head an army;”<sup>g</sup> only one inference follows,—that what has been, may be again, unless effectual measures are taken to prevent it: And if, when the trade of England was not one hundredth part of what it was during the late war, the most serious annoyance was felt at the interruption of that trade from this quarter; it is plain that the issue of a successful descent on these Islands by an enterprising enemy, would be fraught with consequences alike embarrassing to Government and ruinous to the mercantile interests.

That a desire to obtain possession of Scilly has, more than once, been felt by our rivals, also admits of proof; for, during the transactions before alluded to, it is said that the Dutch admiral, who was charged to make complaints on the part of his countrymen, was commissioned to offer terms to Sir John Granville, (the Royalist Governor of Scilly) for delivering up the Islands to him, for a valuable consideration. It is certain that, at the commencement of hostilities between Great Britain and revolutionary France, a seventy-four gun ship and a frigate were dispatched from the enemy’s coast

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<sup>f</sup> Whitelock’s Memorials, p. 465.

<sup>g</sup> Whitelock, p. 467.



to make a landing here. Providentially for the islanders, the larger vessel got on the rocks to the Westward of St. Agnes, at night, and every soul perished:<sup>h</sup> The frigate with difficulty returned to port, and the enterprize was abandoned. It may also be remembered that, during the recent contest with America, such, at one time, was the state and dispersion of our Navy, that a squadron of three of the enemy's heavy frigates, appearing in the mouth of the channel, excited no small alarm, particularly in the West of England. Had the commanders of those frigates,—with the characteristic temerity of their transatlantic compatriots, and which may sometimes pass, with the injudicious, for true courage,—made a landing on the Scilly Islands, they might not only have done the most serious injury,—by pillaging and destroying houses, boats, crops, and every kind of property;—but, had they thought fit, under favourable circumstances, to protract their stay; it would have required considerable expence to dislodge them.

As a suitable sphere for the extension of the Fisheries, and, consequently, as a valuable nursery for skilful pilots and hardy seamen, Scilly possesses no common claims to attention.

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<sup>h</sup> Not a week before writing this, I saw the graves of several who were washed ashore and buried at St. Agnes.

On these subjects, especially the former, much will be found in succeeding chapters. It is hoped, however, that what has been already advanced will tend to give an air of national interest to a work which might appear only calculated to gratify a transient curiosity; and that these hitherto greatly-neglected Islands will at length experience that attention from the Government and the country, to which they are, on so many accounts, entitled.

## CHAPTER II.

## HISTORICAL RESEARCHES.

*The Scilly Islands probably known, by their produce, to the remotest nations of antiquity.—Tin mentioned in Scripture.—That metal could only have been known in the East by commerce.—Scilly visited by the Phœnicians.—Probability that the tin mentioned in Scripture was raised in Scilly.—Tyre a great emporium for Tin.—The Phœnicians came to Scilly from Spain.—Various denominations of Scilly by the ancients.—Manners and dress of the aboriginal Islanders.—Articles bartered by the Phœnicians.—Remarkable anecdote of a Phœnician ship-master.—Scilly under the Romans, by whom it was used as a place of banishment.—The Islands visited by King Athelstan.—Government, down to the time of Henry the Eighth.—Attempt to explain some of the modern names of the Islands.—Name of SCILLY, whence derived.—Tenures under which the Islands have been held.—Their reduced condition in 1484.—St. Mary's fortified by Elizabeth, during the threatened Spanish Invasion.—The last hold of the Royalists*

*in the civil wars.—Loss of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and several of his Fleet, on the rocks of Scilly.*

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**REDUCED** as the Scilly Islands at present are, in wealth and attraction, there appears sufficient ground for believing, on the testimony of ancient authors of undoubted veracity, that “they were earlier and better known” to the most considerable nations of antiquity, “than most other parts of Britain.” That the Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans, traded here “for tin, lead, and hides,” has been also asserted; and, from strong grounds of inferential reasoning, the fact may be nearly established that this commerce existed, with the former people, even prior to the date of the oldest profane histories.

In the writings of the venerable Legislator of the Jews, it is recorded that, at the spoiling of the Midianites by the children of Israel (which took place above fourteen hundred years before the Incarnation) “the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the *tin*, and the *lead*,” were preserved, and purified by fire.\*

*Tin*, indeed, is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, whence it may be inferred that that metal was plentiful in Canaan. Now, it

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\* Numbers xxxi, 22, 3.

is well known that Syria (or *Assyria*) which was the ancient Canaan, is situated on the Eastern extremities of the Mediterranean, including Phœnicia—(formerly Sidon)—and Tyre, so remotely and extensively famed for merchandize. Indeed, the name *Canaan*, itself, signifies a merchant, or trader. How some of the metals, enumerated by Moses, were found so plentiful in the land of Canaan as the foregoing facts would seem to imply,—except by commercial means,—it would be difficult to shew from what is at present known of that region and the parts adjacent. Iron, indeed, according to some modern travellers, abounds there; and Volney says, “there is a *vague report*, that there was anciently a copper-mine near Aleppo, but it must have been long since abandoned:” He also adds an account, which he received from the Druzes, that, “in the declivity” of one of their hills, “a mineral was discovered which produced both lead and silver; but as such a discovery would have ruined the whole district, by attracting the attention of the Turks, they made haste to destroy every vestige of it.”<sup>b</sup> Admitting, however, that not only iron, but silver, lead, and even copper,—(for the latter metal is found by mineralogists to be distributed very generally almost throughout the globe)

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<sup>b</sup> Travels in Egypt and Syria, vol. I. p. 281.

—have been raised in Canaan ; nothing appears to induce a belief, or even to sanction an idea, that *tin-mines* were found in that country. According to Whitaker, tin “ was discovered only in Portugal, and the adjoining parts of Spain to the North. There,” says he, “ the Syrians of Carthage previously found it, and the Tyrians of Cadiz” (whom he, with most other historians, believed to be the first that visited Scilly) “ therefore ranged the seas for more of it.” “ The mines of Spain and Portugal,” he adds, “ appear, from the very celebrity of the *Sylley* mines in all ages of antiquity, to have been as unproductive in themselves, as they must have been prior in working ; and are known to have been quite exhausted for ages.”

But, with all due respect for this learned and diligent antiquary and historian, it may be observed that he seems to have fallen into an anachronism in saying that tin was *first* discovered in Spain and Portugal by the Syrians of Carthage, when he had before stated that those Carthaginians had been transplanted from the original Phœnicians, (or Midianites<sup>c</sup>) amongst

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<sup>c</sup> “ Since not only Procopius and Suidas, but an earlier author, Moses Chloronensis, (p. 52, 53) and perhaps from his original author, Mariba Catina, one as old as Alexander the Great, set down the famous inscription at Tanger concerning the old Canaanites driven out of Palestine by Joshua ; take it here in that author’s own words: *We are*

whom, as has before been shewn, tin was found in abundance on their invasion by the Israelites. But whence was it *then* procured?

—We have the authority of Strabo to prove that the Phœnicians, besides being intimately acquainted with the Mediterranean coasts, had ventured to pass beyond the Pillars of Hercules (or the Straits of Gibraltar) very soon after the Trojan war, which was not above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Moses; and the circumnavigation of Africa by Phœnician sailors, under the auspices of Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt, six hundred years before the commencement of the Christian era, as related by Herodotus,<sup>a</sup> shews not only the enterprising spirit, but the nautic skill, of that commercial people, in those remote days.\* Solinus says that Hamilco,—a Carthaginian, belonging to the Silures (a Phœnician colony

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*those exiles that were governors of the Canaanites, but have been driven away by Joshua the robber, and are come to inhabit here.”* Whiston's Josephus, vol. I. b. 5. ch. i. note.

<sup>a</sup> Lib. i and iv. Of Pharaoh Necho, see II Chron. xxxv. 20.

\* They began their voyage by the Red Sea, returning through the Atlantic, by the Pillars of Hercules, to the Mediterranean. This navigation was happily accomplished above two thousand years before Vasquez de Gama acquired immortal honour by traversing a part of the same seas, in his route round the Cape of Good Hope to the Indies.

in Spain)—was employed to make a voyage to the Northern coasts of that country; whilst Hanno, another Carthaginian, was engaged in traversing the sea in a contrary direction: But the date of those enterprizes is only conjectural.

However, it is clear that previous to either of the events above mentioned, the Phœnicians had planted colonies, and established commercial relations, on the most advantageous points of the Mediterranean coasts. They must, therefore, have had some establishments on the extensive Southern coasts of Spain, which were well known, not only to the Carthaginians, but to their ancestors the Tyrians; and, as Spain had mines of copper and lead, as well as of tin;—as those mines are even stated by Whitaker to have been on the *North* of that country by which the distance between Scilly and the establishments of the enterprising Phœnicians was much shortened; I submit a conjecture that the Scilly Islands might have supplied tin (through the medium of their Tyrian visitors) to the land of Canaan, even before the incursion of the Israelites into that country, that is to say, above fifteen hundred years before the Incarnation.

However this may be—(and I own that the



enquiry is more curious than useful)—it is certain that Ezekiel speaks of Tyre as having long been the emporium “*for many Isles.*” “All the ships of the sea, with their mariners,” says he, “were in thee to occupy thy merchandize. Tarshish was thy merchant, by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches, with silver, iron, *tin*, and *lead*, they traded in thy fairs.”<sup>a</sup> Isaiah also, who lived seven hundred years before the advent of Christ, speaks of *tin* as the customary alloy of finer metals:<sup>b</sup> and Homer

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xxvii, 3, 9, 12. Lowth, in his Commentary on this passage, says, “Tarshish probably signifies a port of Spain, called by the Greek and Latin authors, *Tartessus*, situate not far from the place where Cadiz now stands.” And, in another place (on Is. ii. 16) he observes, “Bochart does probably guess that, Tarshish, in its primary signification, was a port in Spain, called afterwards *Tartessus*. . . . Wherever this Tarshish stood,” he continues, “(and ’tis not unlikely that in process of time this name might be given to more places than one) it was famous in former times for the traffic of the Phœnicians, who were the first merchant adventurers.” This exactly agrees with the poet *Avienus* (whose name will recur presently) who, treating of the *Æstrymnides*, or Isles of Scilly, says,

*Tartesiisque in Terminos Æstrymnidum  
Negotiandi mos erat, Carthaginis  
Etiam colonis—*

“Oft the *Tartessians* through the well known seas  
“Would sail for traffic to th’ *Æstrymnides*;  
“And Carthaginians too”—

<sup>b</sup> Is. i, 5.

—(to descend to prophane authors)—notices it as used in the composition of the Shield of Achilles;<sup>1</sup> but whether the *kassiteron* of the Thracian warrior were raised from the mines of Spain, Portugal or Scilly, the reader will conjecture for himself.

I am aware that the late French traveller,<sup>2</sup> treating of the Grecian Islands, says that not only iron, but zinc, copper, and tin, “remain useless in the bowels of the mountains,” of the isle of Cyprus,—the ancient *Macaria*,—being “more deeply buried by despotism than by the earth with which they are covered.” I do not, however, remember to have seen this statement corroborated by any other writer. On the other hand, Pliny,<sup>3</sup> speaking of those metals which are still the staple commodity of Cornwall, as they formerly were of its neighbouring Isles of Scilly, says, “Of lead there are two sorts, black and white. The white” (*i. e. tin*) “is the best; called by the Greeks *κασσίτερον*, by the Latins, *Stannum*,

<sup>1</sup> Χαλκὸν δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλον ἀπειρέα ΚΑΣΣΙΤΕΡΟΝ τε,  
καὶ χρυσὸν τιμῆντα, καὶ ἀργυρον· II. XVIII. l. 474.

*Aes autem in igne posuit indomitum, stannumque,  
Et aurum pretiosum, et argentum.* Clarke.

Brass in the raging fire he threw, and tin,  
And precious gold, and silver :—

<sup>2</sup> *Sonini*: See his “Travels in Greece and Turkey.”

<sup>3</sup> Lib. xxxiv. c. 16.

*which is fabulously reported to grow in the Isles of the Atlantic Ocean*, and to be brought thence in wicker vessels, covered round with hides. Now it is known," he adds, "to grow in Lusitania and Gallicia, in a sandy black soil, which is judged of only by weight."—Pliny appears to have come to his conclusion of the incredibility of the above account from his being unacquainted, not only with the nature but with the existence of the Scilly Islands; and it was long the successful policy of those who traded here, to keep that knowledge wholly to themselves, of which a remarkable instance will presently be adduced. Certainly it is no sufficient argument that tin should not be found "in the Islands of the Atlantic ocean," because it was also raised in Spain and Portugal. It may moreover be observed, that the terms, "a sandy black soil," which Pliny says indicates the presence of tin, are peculiarly applicable to the soil of the Scilly Islands.<sup>m</sup>

Festus Avienus, a poet who wrote a book *De Oris Maritimis*, and who is said to have seen the journal of the before mentioned Hamilco, describes these Islands as if they were then well known. He calls them *Æstrym-*

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<sup>m</sup> See the subsequent chapter.

nides,"—notices the abundance of lead and tin found in them,—and particularly adverts to the fragile vessels of the natives; which Pliny thought *fabulous*.<sup>o</sup>

\* Probably from *Ολσρπος*, *stimulus*, from the general swell or agitation of the sea around them.

• *In quo Insula sese exerunt Æstrymnides*

*Laxe jacentes, et metallo divites*

*Stanni atque Plumbi : multa vis hic gentis est :*

*Superbus animus ; efficax solertia*

*Negotiandi cura jugis omnibus.*

*Nolusque cymbis turbidum late fretum,*

*Et belluosi gurgitum oceani secant.*

*Non his carinas quippe pinus texere*

*Facere morem non abiete ut usus est,*

*Curvant Phaselo : sed rei ad miraculum*

*Navigia junctis semper aptant pellibus,*

*Corioque vastum sæpe percurrunt salem.*

There the *Æstrymnides* are scattering spread,

Rich in metallic stores of tin and lead.

Strong are the people ; of a lofty mind ;

Skilful, laborious ; and to trade inclined.

Yet not in wooden barks, from danger free,

They roam abroad, and cleave the raging sea :

Unknown to them the art to bend the pine,—

To curve the keel,—the well-wrought planks to join,

And form a solid ship, prepared to sweep

The swelling surface of the frightful deep ;—

But (strange to tell ! ) in vessels formed of hide,<sup>o</sup>

Oft through the wave their vent'rous course they  
guide. W.

<sup>o</sup> These leathern boats, or coracles, are still used by some of the Welsh fishermen, who call them *corragie*. In some instances they use

The ancient Greeks call these Islands *Ἑσπερίδες* (*Hesperides*) or the Western Isles ; but the Phœnicians had previously distinguished them by the name of *Κασσιτερίδες* (*Cassiterides*) or Tin Isles, and this was their original denomination, long before they were known either to Grecian or Roman navigators ; for “ the Phœnician trade was at its height ” (as the learned Dr. Stukely observes ) “ before the Grecians had any history.”

It is probable, not only that Scilly was first discovered by Phœnicians, from Spain, but also that it was (at least in a great measure) peopled from that country. Spain was called, by ancient authors, *Hesperia*; and it is scarcely to be doubted that the Phœnicians, when they had discovered the value of these Islands, would send over some of their countrymen, to prosecute and superintend the works connected with its produce and their traffic.—Those colonists, from their long and peaceful residence among the natives—(if, indeed, there were any aboriginal natives in this sequestered spot)—were probably united to them by the closest ties ; and hence Tacitus describes the ancient Scillonians as having swarthy complexions, and curled hair, like the

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oiled-cloth instead of leather, over the wicker frame-work of their vessels. In most of the voyages of celebrated navigators we find accounts of good sea boats formed of very slight materials.

Spaniards. Dyonisius Alexandrinus also asserts that the Islands were occupied by the people of Spain.\*

Strabo, in the third book of his Geography says, "The Isles *Cassiterides* are ten in number close to one another, and situated in the ocean, to the North of the port *Artabri*;" and that "one of them is desert and unpeopled." In this number he probably included *St. Helen's*, which, though now uninhabited, still exhibits the ruins of houses; and it is very probable that *Teän* and the larger *White Island* were formerly peopled, which, with the six remaining principal Islands, and the desolate Isle of *Annet*, make up his number. He describes the dress of the natives as consisting of black garments reaching down to their

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— Ἀντὰρ ἱπ' ἄκρην

Ἰρὴν ἣν ἐνέπυσσι καρὴν ἔμεν Εὐρωπείης

Νῆσος δ' ἙΣΠΕΡΙΔΑΣ, τόθι κασσυτέρω γενέσθαι

Ἀφρείοι γαίηςσιν ἀγαυῶν παῖδες IBHPQN.

*Sed summam contra sacram cognomine dicunt*

*Quam caput Europæ, sunt stanni pondere plena*

*Hesperides, populus tenuit quas fortis Iberi.*

Which has been thus Englished :

"Against the sacred cape,\* great Europe's head,

"Th' *Hesperides* along the ocean spread;

"Whose wealthy hills with mines of tin abound,

"And stout *Iberians* till the fertile ground."

\* Cape Ortegal.

ances, and girt about their breasts ; and adds, that they carried staves in their hands, and lived by their cattle, straggling up and down like them, without a fixed abode or habitation ; and that they had mines of tin and lead, which commodities they used to barter with merchants for salt, earthen vessels, and implements of brass.

It is probable that, for several centuries,—(the number of which can only be ascertained when the date of the discovery of the Islands shall be known)—this commercial intercourse continued, although, in process of time, the Greeks and Romans became desirous of participating so lucrative a traffic ; in which desire, however, they were long foiled by the prudence of the first traders. A remarkable anecdote of the energy and discretion of the Phœnicians in preserving their secret is recorded. The Romans, in the year 1044 before Christ, in order to discover the destination of a Phœnician vessel, caused her to be pursued and watched by some of their fleetest ships ; but the Phœnician captain, suspecting their object, led them by a circuitous route, and at length ran his vessel on another shore.<sup>1</sup> After

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<sup>1</sup> Some make this shore the Land's End : But as there seems some reason to believe, what Pryce and others so strenuously assert, that the Western parts of Cornwall—

bringing his pursuers into the most imminent danger by this bold and decisive expedient, he

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were included in the *Cassiterides* of the ancients, and visited by them for tin; it is hardly probable that the Phœnician ship-master would conduct his enemies so near the actual source of the prosperity of his compatriots.

*Note 2nd.* Having, in the preceding paragraph, adverted to a favourite hypothesis of certain Cornish authors,—that Cornwall was included in the general name of the Tin-Country; I think it but right, (as Whitaker has done before me) to guard against that notion being taken too extensively. Pryce, indeed, says that “the remains of any tin-workings are scarcely discernible” in Scilly; “for there is but one place,” he adds, “that exhibits even the imperfect appearance of a mine, and so necessary an appendage to a mine as an *adit* to unwater the workings, is not to be seen in all the Islands.” I know not to what place Pryce particularly alludes, but with regard to adits, the objection seems easily capable of solution, as the rude operations of mining, in the remote times which we have been contemplating, probably extended no further than to a bare opening of the ground to the depth and width of a few yards, and many excavations of that nature may still be seen in the different Islands. Yet there are several subterraneous passages of great extent, in St. Mary’s, St. Martin’s, Tresco, and other Isles, to which it would be easy to affix the nature and properties of adits (or water-courses) could the *shafts* (or perpendicular excavations of the mines with which they communicated) be satisfactorily traced.—(May not some of those shafts, which never could have been of any great depth, have been filled up by the falling in of the earth, and other causes, acting through a long succession of ages?)—Confining myself, however, to the opinion of the inexperience



received the value of his ship and cargo out of the public treasury ;—a very moderate recompence, it must be allowed, for such a striking instance of patriotism.

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of the ancients, compared to the moderns, in working mines, I will only add that Borlase noticed a row of those tin-pits ( or *koffens* as they are denominated by miners ) on Dolphin Downs, in Tresco ; and that Whitaker has shown, from Troutbeck, that there are several such on different Islands. It may also be fairly presumed that many of the old works have disappeared amongst the sands, or *flats*, which have been formed between the Islands by the subsidence of the land and the encroachments of the sea.

As a proof of the high antiquity of the tin-trade in these parts, I subjoin an extract from Dr. Stukely, who, treating of the great quantity of pewter found near the burrows about Normanton Ditch, in the vicinity of Stonehenge, says, “ No doubt this was some of the old *British Stannum*, which the *Tyrian Hercules*, surnamed *Melcarthus*, first brought *ex Cassiteride Insula*, or Britain: which Hercules lived in Abraham’s time, or soon after.” Had the Doctor been more intimately acquainted with these Islands, would he not, instead of “ Britain” have written *Scilly*? Surely, after what has been stated, it requires but little argument to support the affirmative.

Lastly : Amidst the corruption of names necessarily occasioned by a diversity of inhabitants, it may be observed that even some of the present denominations of the Isles seem to favour an idea of mines having been wrought here. The word *Guél*, or *Huél*, now generally spelt *Wheal*, signifies, in Cornu-British, a *working for tin*. We have an Island still called *Guahall* or *Gweall*; and some have supposed that the names *Minewithen*, *Mincarlo*, &c. had reference to mines : But of this I shall say no more at present,

At what time the Romans succeeded in discovering these Islands, does not appear. Julius Cæsar, whose first expedition into Britain was made fifty two years before Christ, had no opportunity of being acquainted with them; nor did Julius Agricola, who first sailed round Britain (A. D. 85) appear to know any thing of Scilly. It is certain, however, that Publius Crassus made a voyage hither from Rome; and, being pleased with the disposition of the people, he taught them an improved method of working their mines, with other arts, suitable to their circumstances. After this, these Islands were used as places of banishment for Roman criminals, many of whom were condemned to work in the mines here. Amongst others, Instantius, a heterodox Bishop, of Spain, and Tiberianus, were banished hither by the Emperor Maximus, and their goods confiscated: Also the Emperor Marcus banished some to Scilly during the Insurrection of Cassius.

When the distresses of the Empire were such as to render it necessary to recall the Roman troops from every part of Britain (A. D. 426,) Scilly reverted to the government of its natives.

The remote situation of these Islands, and the little attention paid to them in those iron ages when Britons, Saxons, and Danes, were alternately harrassing, and harrassed by, each other, under all the circumstances of barbarian

warfare,—occasion a chasm of nearly five hundred years in the history of Scilly, which no writer has attempted to supply. This is the more to be regretted, as it was probably in this interval that those changes occurred in the natural state and appearance of the Islands, in which most writers are agreed as to the facts, though neither the date of the catastrophe which some imagine to have happened, nor the extent of its violence, can be satisfactorily ascertained.\*

That these Islands, like the coasts of England were occasionally subject to the incursive ravages of the Danes,—and that they often sheltered the Cornish Britons from the persecutions of their Saxon lords, cannot be doubted: Sufficient traces may be found, in the remains of ancient fortifications, and in the appellations of various places, to establish these points; which, indeed, the contiguity of the Islands to Britain renders more than probable. Yet, such was the general ignorance respecting them, in those ages of darkness and barbarity, that, from the period of the departure of the Romans, down to the commencement of the tenth century, all knowledge of them appears to have been involved in impenetrable gloom. We can only conjecture,

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\* See Chapter iii. Part I.

therefore, that the natives continued, in a great measure, to live “in the old manner” described by Strabo, some of whose observations were applicable to their state only a few years since. According to him, “they had no markets, nor did money pass among them, but they gave in exchange one thing for another, and so provided themselves with necessaries.”—This latter fact was true of all the Islanders in their intercourse with shipping, till the establishment of the Preventive System deprived them of that advantageous mode of barter, which, before, they had so long and beneficially enjoyed, But of this subject I shall treat hereafter.

When Athelstan, the eighth Saxon King of England, had overcome the insurrection of the Britons in the West, (A. D. 927) he determined, in the true spirit of a conqueror, to pursue his victories to the utmost point where rebellion had found its way. Accordingly,—after making a religious vow in the ancient Church of St. Burian, near the Land’s End,—he departed with his forces for Scilly; and, having shortly accomplished the expulsion of the Danes, and the subjection of the Islands, he determined to annex Scilly to the Crown of England; on his return to which, he is traditionally reported to have fulfilled his vow, by the erection of a College, near the Church

of St. Burian :—Some part of its walls are still remaining.

This visit of Athelstan's to Scilly is the more remarkable as he was the only Monarch who ever graced these Islands by the royal presence.

From the reign of Athelstan to that of Henry VIII. the civil government of Scilly appears to have been chiefly vested in certain officers called Coroners ; and its ecclesiastical jurisdiction ( with great privileges ) was settled on the abbots of Tavistock, under the Bishops of Exeter. Athelstan erected a monastery of Benedictines in that city, A. D. 932 ; and Ordgar, Earl of Devonshire, founded an abbey of the same order at Tavistock, in the year 961. This was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Rumon, and included Scilly, wherein ( according to Archbishop Tanner ) there was a cell of two Benedictine monks, even before the Conquest. From these circumstances it is inferred that the Island of St. Mary's derived its present name.\*

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\* From the same source, it is probable, most of the present denominations of the principle Islands were derived. In the different grants, charters, &c. which are in being, respecting them they are not exactly enumerated, and are so variously designated that it is difficult to decide what places are meant by some of the names therein specified. *Tresco* (formerly *Treskowe*, though Leland calls

“After the dissolution of abbies and monastical estates,” says Heath, “the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Scilly devolving to the See of Exeter, the civil power was granted by the Crown to Lords Proprietors, on condition of their paying certain rents into the hands of the Receiver for the Duchy of Cornwall, for the tenure of those Islands; by which they came to be acknowledged as part of the jurisdiction of the said Duchy; but only by the king’s favour, for I cannot find by any records that ever they were annexed thereunto. And here I shall observe,” adds the same writer, “that in the Grant of the Duchy of Cornwall ( which I have seen ) to the Prince of Wales, as eldest

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it *Miscaw*) and Bryher ( or *Brefar* ) appears to be Cornubian appellations. *St. Theona* ( now called *Teñ*, or *Teau* ) and *St. Helens*, were probably so named by the Greeks. *St. Elidius* I suppose to be the same which Leland calls *St. Lyde’s*, but which is now only known by the name of *Rat Island*. ‘*The Island of St. Nicholas*,” was but another name for *Tresco*, the abbey on that Island being dedicated to that saint. There are no Islands now known by the name of *Nullo*, *Eunor* or *Arwothal*: *Eunor*, being noticed as having a castle, must either have been *St. Mary’s* or *Tresco*: I suppose the former. There is an islet called *Menarworth Rock*, near *St. Helen’s*, which is now, by a bold but very intelligible misnomer, stiled the *Man-of-War Rock*! *Guynhill* and *Gwynhellever* are probably the two *Ganillies* of the present day. *Annet* should properly be spelt as it was formerly,—*Agnette*, signifying *Little Agnes*, as it lies contiguous to *St. Agnes Island*.

Son of [the King of] England, there is no mention made of the Islands of Scilly; though *Boroughs, Franchises, Liberties, Corporations, Privileges, Immunities, &c.* are particularly recited; whence if Scilly appertains [to,] or is a part of, the said Duchy, it is rather permitted by favour than given to be so by Royal Authority; especially as the *Grant* of those Islands to several late Proprietors, is expressed in so ample a manner.”<sup>1</sup>

Having now brought down the history of Scilly to modern days; some remarks and conjectures as to its present appellation may be allowed.

It would seem that Scilly changed its name almost as often as it changed its masters or its commercial relations. In the denominations of many of the islets and rocks, some connection with Grecian, Roman, Danish, and British names may be found. By the Romans these Islands were called *Sigdeles*, and *Sillina Insulae*; by the Britons *Sulléh*, signifying *rocks dedicated to the Sun*. In many of the old grants before alluded to, and still preserved in the Tower Records, they are styled *Sulley* and

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of various Deeds, Grants, Records, &c. respecting the Scilly Islands, from the time of Hen. I. (A. D. 1120) to that of Will. III. (A. D. 1698) are given in Heath, but would be useless here.

*Sully*; some suppose the present denomination a contraction of the Roman *Insulæ*; but if I might be permitted to hazard an opinion, I would deduce the name *Scilly* from the false orthography, or misreading, of *Sully* before mentioned. The *u* being mistaken for *ci* (an error very likely to happen in manuscripts) we come without difficulty to the exact modern appellation, which we find derived from the British.

In resuming the slender thread of history, the next important object that strikes the attention (after the annexation of the Scilly Isles to the Crown, by Athelstan) is the grant made by Henry the First, to Osbert, Abbot of Tavistock, of "all the churches of *Sully*, with their appurtenances," and the land as the monks or hermits held it in the time of King Edward the Confessor, and Burgal, Bishop of Cornwall. Reginald (the King's son) Earl of Cornwall, confirmed the same, with the further grant of all wreck which might happen in the Islands, "except whale and whole ship;" and this grant was further confirmed and allowed by Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter, "as Bishop and Diocesan by Episcopal Authority."

During the following reigns many other grants are recorded, chiefly for the advantage of the monks at Tresco. In the time of Henry



the Sixth, these Islands were held of the King at the yearly rent of "*fifty puffins*, or six shillings and eight pence!"—So greatly had they declined, in prosperity and importance, in the fifteenth century!

The sway of the Usurper beheld them in a still more miserable condition. In the year 1484, when Richard the Third caused an inquisition of their value to be taken, they were reported to be "worth forty shillings a year in time of peace, but in time of war *nothing*!"

In the next century, however, their importance seemed to be more justly appreciated. Queen Elizabeth, menaced by the Spaniards, then the most powerful people in the world at sea, resolved to fortify these Islands, as the key to England. Accordingly, Sir Francis Godolphin, Lord Lieutenant of the county of Cornwall, who then held Scilly under the Crown at a yearly rent of ten pounds, was ordered and encouraged to take proper measures for its defence. Star Castle was begun and finished in the year 1593, and some other fortifications were constructed on the hill beneath it. This appearance of security encouraged several people to build houses immediately under the hill, fronting the pool; where they enjoyed many conveniences for commerce, and were sure of protection from pirates or other depredators, by the garrison above.

During the troublous times of Charles the First, and the Protectorate, Scilly became an object of great political importance, Dr. Bastwick, who had been sentenced by the Star Chamber, in the reign of Charles, to pay a fine of five thousand pounds, to stand in the pillory, to have his ears cut off, and afterwards to be imprisoned for life, for writing "seditious, schismatical, and libellous books;"—after receiving the former part of his severe sentence, was shut up in the Star Castle at St. Mary's, where he remained for three years, until, his party having gained the ascendancy, he was liberated and pensioned by order of Parliament, in the year 1640.

In the struggles between the Royal and Parliamentary armies, when the King's cause had become hopeless even in Cornwall; the Prince of Wales (afterwards Charles the Second) retired from Pendennis Castle, at Falmouth,—one of the last fortresses which fell to the Parliamentary troops,—to Scilly, where he landed on the Fourth of March, 1645, accompanied by Lord Colepepper and others, and was soon joined by Lords Hopton and Capel, the enemy's whole army having then entered Cornwall, and the King's forces there having been disbanded. After remaining here about six weeks, without receiving some expected supplies from France, His Royal Highness,

apprehensive of the approach of the Parliamentary fleet, set out for Guernsey, whence, shortly after, he removed to that kingdom.

After his departure, Sir John Granville, then Governor of Scilly, who still held this place for the Crown, displayed such zeal and vigour in his command, and so severely annoyed the trade both of Holland and England by the privateers fitted out hence; that the States ordered their admiral, Van Tromp, with a fleet of twelve men of war, to fall on these Islands for satisfaction, as it was pretended, but really for the purpose of getting them into their own hands by force or fraud. In order to gain the more perfect success by this latter expedient, they commissioned Van Tromp to treat with the Governor for delivering them up, under a pretence of holding them for Charles the Second; but that able officer was neither to be cajoled by their promises nor terrified by their threats, which, it appears they did not venture to put into execution.

The Parliamentary expedition, however, which soon after invaded Scilly, had better success. On the eighth of May, 1651, Sir George Ayscough, or Askew, and Admiral Blake, arrived in St. Mary's Roads, with a formidable number of ships and men, and made a disposition for playing upon the castle and battering the town. Hereupon a treaty

was proposed by Sir John Granville, and agreed to by the besiegers, but by some misunderstanding it was not carried into effect. The Island was vigorously attacked by the fleet, and defended by the garrison. On the 16th, the Parliamentary forces had made themselves masters of Tresco and Bryher, on the former of which was a strong castle, but too remote to be of use in the then pending operations. Another attempt was made to treat with Sir John Granville, but this was also ineffectual. At the end of the same month a descent was made on St Mary's, and the troops in that garrison (consisting of eight hundred men, besides an immense number of officers) being greatly straitened for want of provisions and water, surrendered on articles to the enemy, and were shipped off for England, Scotland, Ireland, and France. Sir John Granville, with colonels Axted, Sadler, and Le Hunt, arrived at Plymouth on the twelfth of June in Sir George Ayscough's ship. They were soon released, and the former followed his Royal Master to the Continent, where he attended him in his distresses in France, Holland, Flanders, and other places. His loyalty and bravery were rewarded, on the Restoration, by the Earldom of Bath.

Soon after the reduction of the Islands, King Charles's Castle, on Tresco (a building

of great strength, but the site of which was injudiciously chosen) was dismantled; and a strong circular tower, with a platform for guns towards the sea, was erected below it. This was called Oliver's Castle, and will be found more particularly described in the chapter appropriated to Tresco.

From the time of the Protectorate, down to the termination of the seventeenth century, nothing of importance is recorded of these Islands. They seemed again to have sunk into neglect and general oblivion, when an event took place which filled the nation with dismay, and which is even yet the theme of painful retrospection whenever the name of Scilly is brought before the mind.

On the twenty-second day of October, in the year 1707, Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel, returning with his fleet from Toulon, was unfortunately lost here, with several of his ships, officers, and men. In the morning of that disastrous day, the fleet came into soundings, in nineteen fathoms of water; when, the wind blowing hard, and the weather being thick and foggy, the signal was made for the fleet to lay-to, under the conviction that they were near the land. At six o'clock in the evening the Admiral made sail again, and was followed by the rest of the ships. Shortly after, perceiving the situation in which he was

placed, he made signals of danger, which were answered by the nearest ships, and operated as a warning to those at a distance to keep off to sea. About eight o'clock, the Admiral's ship, the Association, struck on the Gilstone, about three miles and a half from St. Agnes, and in a place surrounded by the most hideous rocks of every description; and, in two minutes afterwards, the vessel went down, and every person on board perished, except one man! The Eagle, captain Hancock, of 70 guns, and the Romney, captain William Cory, likewise perished with all their crews. The Firebrand, fireship, was also lost, but the captain (Percy) and twenty four of the company, saved themselves in the boat. The Phoenix, fireship, captain Sansom, ran ashore, but was got off again.

There perished, on this occasion, the Admiral, Sir Cloudesley Shovel; Captain Lodes, of the Association; Sir John Narborough and James, his brother, sons of Lady Shovel, by a former husband; Mr. Trelawny, eldest son to the Bishop of Winchester; and about two thousand men!

The preservation of those who escaped was scarcely less than miraculous: In many instances the hand of Providence was distinctly visible.—Sir George Byng, of the Royal Anne, who was scarcely half a mile to windward of

the Admiral, saw the breakers, and, immediately afterwards, he discovered the rocks by which he was surrounded, one of which carried away the larboard quarter gallery; and the ship would inevitably have been dashed to pieces, but for the presence of mind of the officers and crew, who, in a minute's time set her topsails, and thus enabled her to stand off, when she was within a ship's length of the rocks! Lord Dursley, in the *St. George*, had a wonderful escape: He struck on the same rocks with Sir Cloudesley, but the same wave that beat out the lights of the *Association*, set the *St. George* again afloat.—The only man who survived the crew of the Admiral's ship, saved himself by floating on a piece of timber to the rock called the Hellweathers, (about two miles and a half from the Gilstone) where he remained some days before any boat could approach to take him off; such was the violence of the weather at that unfortunate time. \*

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\* He was at length rescued from his perilous situation by a boat belonging to *St. Agnes*, where, I have learnt, he made the following statements:

The day before the occurrence of the disaster, a seaman of the *Association*, well acquainted with the navigation of the Channel, ventured to represent to the Admiral that, by the course he was steering, he would inevitably run on Scilly rocks.\* The Admiral, incensed at this interference,

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\* See the note in the 2nd page of the preceding chapter.

The body of Sir Cloudesley Shovel was washed ashore at Porth-Hellick Bay, in St. Mary's, about eight miles from the rock on which his ship was lost. It was found by a soldier and his wife, who buried it in the sand. When driven ashore, it was naked, and the unfortunate Admiral was only recognized by the diamond ring which he wore on his finger, and which the soldier afterwards presented to Lady Shovel, who rewarded him with a pension, knowing the ring to have been her husband's. The body was afterwards taken up, and conveyed in a ship of war to Plymouth, where it lay in state, in the Citadel. Thence it was removed to Lady Shovel's residence in Soho square, after which it was deposited, with becoming honours, in Westminster Abbey ; where an ample monument, more pompous than tasteful, still recalls the memory of the direful tale.\*

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charged him with insubordination and with endeavouring to excite a mutiny in the ship ; and, in a very summary manner, condemned him to be hanged. The poor fellow begged, as a last favour, that a Psalm might be read before his execution, which, being granted, he made choice of the *Hundred and Ninth*, so distinguished for expressions either imprecatory or declaratory of evil ! He was hanged, however, according to his sentence, and the preceding narrative certainly derives an additional horror from this circumstance.

\* See more on this subject in the chapter relating to St. Mary's.



From the period of the disastrous fate of Sir Cloudesley Shovel and his crew, down to the present time, the Scilly Islands have in general been regarded with an apprehensive and melancholy interest, as the dreaded and almost inevitable sources of naval disaster. It is deeply to be deplored that those apprehensions have sometimes been but too prophetic;—that vessels of different nations, in some instances bearing warriors across the sea to fight the battles of their native land,—in others, laden with the products of industry, and bent on the cultivation of pacific relations, have here, through the extent of the dangers by which those Islands are surrounded,—the violence of weather,—the unskilfulness of their navigators, or other causes,—been consigned to destruction, and have whelmed their hardy crews in a watry grave. Yet it is pleasing to reflect that, of late, such disasters have been much less frequent than formerly; and that, for above seven years past, no wreck of importance has been known on the Islands. This may be in a great measure owing to the excellent and vivid light, nightly displayed at St. Agnes, and to the improved practical acquaintance of naval men with the Islands, resulting from some valuable charts and surveys lately published. When the cause of danger cannot be removed, the only object of

rational enquiry is, by what means it may be approached with the least peril. To elucidate this enquiry with regard to Scilly, much has already been done, and more, it is hoped, will yet be attained. But human art and human industry are alike vain without the blessing of HIM who

“ Rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm,”

and whose wonderful works are in an especial manner manifested to those “ who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy business in the great waters.” May HE continue to avert from the ships of Britain, and of every other nation of the universe, those disasters which have so long given an unhappy celebrity to the Isles of Scilly!

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## CHAPTER III.

## NATURAL HISTORY OF THE SCILLY ISLANDS.

*Of the Soils and Products.—The Tradition of the ‘Lionesse,’ and the Arguments by which it was supported, stated at length, examined, and disproved.—Of the Changes which have really happened to these Islands, and the Cause by which they were effected.—Probability of more Islands being speedily formed.—Of Vegetables, Beasts, Fowl, and Fish.—No Venomous Creatures found in Scilly.—Mildness and Salubrity of the Air.—Water.—Luminous Appearance of the Sea.—Winds and Storms.—A Poem written at Scilly.*

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I HAVE already described the general appearance of these Islands, from which a sufficiently accurate idea of their soils and products may be formed. No timber trees are here to be seen, and but a few fruit trees, the latter of which are only found in some sheltered grounds on St. Mary's. The vegetable soil is a black peat, intermingled with granitulous particles, and known in Cornwall by

the name of *black growan*, or gritty. This stratum is about two feet in depth, becoming of a lighter and grayish colour in proportion to its distance from the surface. Next to this is a yellowish loamy clay, found in a stratum of five or six feet in depth, and intermixed with stones. The colour of the clay becomes darker, and the stones imbedded in it are larger, in proportion to their depth from the surface. Under the whole are found large masses of granite rock, fit for building and other purposes.

The natural products of the soil seem to be a thin, short, poor grass, intermixed with a few heath flowers, and a dwarf kind of furze. In many places the sea has thrown up vast quantities of a fine white, shining sand. That which settles on the sea shore, receiving perhaps various (though imperceptible) depositions, by means of the winds, birds, &c. soon acquires a scanty verdure, of a mossy nature, springing from one considerable root about eight or nine inches long, and throwing out long and creeping branches over the surface. Fern seems to spring spontaneously on this arid soil, striking its black and tough roots to a depth of several feet. The appearance of its broad green leaves over the white and glittering sand, is very peculiar, and somewhat pleasing.

The sub-stratum of all the Islands is granite. Indeed, from the proportion it bears to the earthy covering with which it is invested, the Islands may be said to be composed of this material. The constituent parts of granite are *felspar*, a greyish crystallized substance;—*quartz*, a crystalline mineral of various shades, inferior to rock crystal;—and *mica*, a whitish shining substance, a variety of the two other parts. Granite, it is well known, is considered the most general of the primitive formations. The varieties found here, as well as in Cornwall, both with respect to the dimensions and hues of its component parts, are almost infinite. When first raised it is soft, and may be worked with little trouble, but after having been for some time exposed to the action of the air, it becomes exceedingly indurated. There are some beds of porphyry, and chlorite, at St. Mary's and some of the other Islands, which are remarkable for their distinct stratification.

On Dolphin Downs, in Tresco, I have observed considerable quantities of gypsum, or alabaster, in small detached stones; I have found the same but in smaller quantities, on the surface of the downs at St. Mary's and St. Martin's, which are about the same height above the level of the sea as Tresco.

The shores of the Scilly Islands are di-

versified by huge rocks, large stones, and sand of different degrees of fineness. The constant action of the sea (and even of the air, strongly impregnated as it is with saline particles) has split and divided the larger masses into a variety of forms; and the severed pieces, being further broken in their fall, have had their angular asperities destroyed by constant attrition with the circumjacent stones. Those, therefore, which are loose, and exposed to the action of the waves, are generally of an oval form, but many of them are of an immense size. The fragments, being decomposed, form a coarse kind of sand between the rocks; and this again, in many instances, being agglutinated by earths from the neighbouring cliffs, is united by the petrifactive qualities of salt water, and hardened into a coarse kind of sandstone. The finer sand which lines many of the bays and shores, is white and shining, formed from the decomposition of the shells of perriwinkles, cockles, and limpets, vast quantities of which are found in the sand thrown up by the sea, and, in their progressive stages of decay, exhibit a variety of beautiful colours; the coarse external lamina being soon destroyed, and the inner coats being in some instances of a pearly brightness; in others, variegated with minute wavy lines of crimson, purple, &c.

From the resemblance between the soils and products of Scilly and Cornwall, some have been of opinion that they were formerly united; and much learning and ingenuity have been employed, aided by some traditionary testimony, in support of this hypothesis, which I propose now to examine at length.

The tradition generally received is this;—that at some undefined period, the neck of land by which Scilly and Cornwall were joined, was destroyed by the submersion of the land, during the prevalence of a mighty tempest, aided by other convulsions of nature;—that the land so submerged was called the *Lioness*; and that it contained *one hundred and forty* parish Churches, all of which were swept away by the resistless ocean.

The learned and ingenious Whitaker, has taken so much pains to establish the main points of the tradition, that it would be unfair not to give an ample outline of the reasoning by which he strives to support it.

(It is but justice, however, to Mr. Whitaker, here to observe that, in order to get rid of the hundred and forty parish churches, he takes upon himself, as he expresses it, “to reduce the number from one hundred and forty; to forty; to suppose a mistake very easy to be committed in numerical figures, to cut off what any dash of the pen might have casually created, the first figure, and so bring the enormous

amount of the whole within the compass of credibility.”)

In adverting to the disastrous event before mentioned, the date of which Mr. Whitaker fixes in the tenth century, he speaks of Scilly in a collective view, as originally consisting of only one Island. “This Isle,” says he, “ranged then all under the eye from the high grounds of the Land’s End, much lower than these grounds, extending from that prominence,” (*i. e.* the Land’s End) “on the East, to the rock on the South-West, about thirty miles in length.” Finding, from Troutbeck, that there is ‘a very bad range of rocks, that lies between Scilly and the Land’s End,’ (with the existence of which, Mr. Whitaker did not appear to have been previously acquainted!) he arrives at his conclusions with a rapidity scarcely to be maintained in the sober process of legitimate investigation. “Just nine furlongs from the Land’s End,” says he, “is another range of rocks, that is denominated the Longships, that extends in a line obliquely abreast of the Land’s End.” His inferences from these scanty *data* are curious :

“The Isle, then,” (*i. e.* Scilly) “*appears to have been* divided from Cornwall by a channel somewhat more than one mile wide, and stretching from the Land’s End to the Longships, but narrowed more than a third of this



breadth, by a shoal on the East of the Longships, that is called the Kettle-Bottom from its form, and has only one fathom of water upon its Northern end, with two fathoms on its Southern. *Such is, such was, the 'Frith' of Solinus*; narrow indeed, and therefore turbulent, yet deep enough at present to afford a free passage to any vessel that draws *not more than twelve fathoms*!"\*

"But the Isle," he adds, "was terminated on the South-west by lofty hills," (*i. e.* the present Scilly Islands);—"terminated on the North-west by hills not so lofty, yet tall," (*q. d.* the Seven Stones?)"—"one in the middle particularly tall, and having a plain extended between both."

"In this plain," he continues, "and about two thirds of the distance from that end of it, appears to have been a town, denominated by the natives of the Land's End, those best repositories for such a tradition concerning such an object, the *City of Lions*; a *Lugdunum* or *Lyons*, probably, in Silura, as in Gaul, so named from its position on a knoll by the water, and thus giving the popular title of *Lyonois* in Gaul, of *Lionesse* in Silura, to the

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\* What an idea must Mr. Whitaker have had of the magnitude and draught of vessels!—The largest line-of-battle ship draws not much more than *four* fathoms!

region itself. *The long plain of the Isle was overflowed at once!* and nothing remained rising above the surface of the sea, except the mountains to the South-West" (*i.e.* the present Scilly) "or the hills to the North-East. These still reared their heads over the deluge around them; those in the shape of Isles, but these in the form of rocks. And the sea, which is said to be forty fathoms in depth at the Longships, is only twenty of the very side of this drowned isle, and not more than eight over the plain of the isle itself."

It is time, now, to put an end to this ingenious but fanciful theory; and this I shall do by a few clear and succinct observations; reserving others for such further arguments as have been advanced on the opposite side.

1. The Seven Stones do not lie in a direct line between Scilly and the Land's End, but full two leagues nearly North-west of that line. Had the promontory of the *Lioness*, therefore, ever existed, it must have described a curve, almost resembling a semicircle, from Scilly to the Land's End. The greatest force of the Atlantic ocean is exerted during the prevalence of storms from the South-Westward, the sea then rushing in with a tremendous under-current from the Bay of Biscay. To this force the Scilly Islands have been constantly exposed, and yet, during the lapse of thousands

of years, they have received, at most, but *partial* injury; whereas the promontory, or (according to Whitaker) the extended island, which is stated to have been *overflowed at once*, could not, from its position, have been acted on in a powerful manner by that or any other sea.

2. The *Frith*, mentioned by Solinus, certainly was *not* that imagined by Mr. Whitaker, extending only from the Land's End to the Longships, and only "nine furlongs wide" by Mr. W's own account. Solinus says that the Scilly Islands are severed from the coast of Danmonium (i. e. Cornwall) "by a rough narrow sea, of three or four hours' passage." Now the voyage from Scilly to *Penzance*,—a distance of forty miles, has often been performed, by the present small packets, with a strong fair gale, in four hours and a half, and, in some few instances in less than four hours. From the *Land's End*, to St. Martin's Island, the distance is not thirty miles, which, therefore, might well be crossed, with a fair wind and tide, in "three or four hours." What would be thought of ships or mariners who were "three or four hours" crossing a *frith*, not much more "than a mile wide, but narrowed more than a third of this breadth by a shoal"?

3. There is no place in Scilly to which the denomination of "*mountain*" can be justly

applied. It is straining the point too far, therefore, to say that the *mountains* remained while the plain was washed away. The highest land in Scilly is not one hundred and seventy feet above the level of the sea.

4th and lastly : The argument respecting the soundings, partakes of the general weakness. "The sea," says Mr. Whitaker, "which is said to be forty fathoms in depth at the Longships, is only twenty at the very side of this drowned isle, and not more than eight over the plain of the isle itself." Unfortunately for the whole theory, this statement, which at first view might seem to carry considerable weight, is altogether erroneous! Any chart of the West coast of Cornwall and the Scilly Islands will shew that at the Longships there are not more than *eight* fathoms of water;—that the whole coarse of the soundings from Scilly to the Seven Stones, and thence half way to the Longships, is from fifty to fifty-two fathoms, diminishing, on the approach to Cornwall to forty-seven and forty-five;—that *Carn Base*, a sand bank near the Longships, having but from eight to ten fathoms of water, is not *three quarters of a mile* long or broad; and that, if any such tract as the *Lionesse* ever existed it must now be *three hundred feet* below the sea! while in those places at Scilly *where the water has* evidently gained on the

Islands, there are not above three or four fathoms at high tides!

Other writers, who have embraced the same opinions as Mr. Whitaker respecting the *Lionesse*, observe,—that the Cornish calls a certain place, surrounded by the Seven Stones, *Tregva*, that is a *dwelling*;—that door and window-frames have been drawn up by fishermen from this place;—that the space between the Land's End and the Isles of Scilly, is still called in Cornish, *Lethowsow*, signifying *the Lioness*;—and that, in a Survey made in the reign of Edward the First, the county of Cornwall was computed to contain 1,500,000 acres of land, although now it does not contain above half that number. All these observations may easily be set aside in like manner as those which have preceded them.

1. That a *name* given to a certain object can have no influence in determining a question of this kind, and in a place where similar objects are so abundant, must be instantly admitted when the number of rocks around Scilly and Cornwall, and the whimsical denominations by which some of them are distinguished, are taken into consideration. For instance, at Scilly we have a rock called *Maiden's Bower*, another denominated *Castle Bryer*, and there is a cluster called *Ley Steeple*, visible only at low water; but would

those who lay such stress on a name, endeavour to support their arguments by finding a tradition of a *bower*, a *castle*, and a *sunken tower* at Scilly?—This need be urged no further. The names of rocks in general are given from some fancied resemblance which they may have to certain objects, in the minds of those by whom they are first discovered. Many rocks, at a distance, appear like castles, churches, or houses; this probably was the case with *one* of the Seven Stones (which are high rocks surrounded by breakers) and hence the name given by the Cornish fishermen to *that rock*,—not to the whole group,—“the *house*,” or “*dwelling*.”

2. With regard to the window-frames;—I made diligent enquiries about these, for a considerable time after my arrival at Scilly, but could find no person who had seen them, or could describe them. At length I was told that one Thomas Stediford, a fisherman of St. Mary's who had been dead forty years, did once draw up something like the frame of a window when fishing near the Seven Stones, but I could gain no further information. However, it must be evident on a moment's thought, that at the time when the reputed catastrophe of the *Lionesse* happened, nothing like our present windows was known. Glazed sashes are, comparatively, of very recent invention;

therefore the window, or fragment of a window, found on the Seven Stones, was probably a part of the stern or cabin of some vessel that had been wrecked, or had foundered, on or near that spot.

3. The preceeding observations on proper names apply here again to the Cornish word *Lethowsow*, or *Lioness*, by which the sea between Scilly and Cornwall is distinguished. And why was it thus named?—Because of its general violence and turbulence, which had been remarked by Solinus,<sup>b</sup> and to which any one who has frequently crossed it, especially in the months between the autumnal and vernal equinoxes, will bear ample testimony. Rivers and seas are frequently denominated after the names of animals whose qualities and motions they may be thought to represent.

4. The Survey of the date of Edward the First, may be clearly shown to have been formed on a medi of division of the counties of Cornwall and Devon which does not now prevail. Cornwall, at present, properly contains no more than 759,681 acres. In order to make it of the dimensions before noted; the supposed tract of land called *Lioness*, the length of which (from Scilly to the Land's

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<sup>b</sup> See what has before been said respecting the name *Ostryaoides*, in chap. ii. Part I.

End) could only have been thirty miles, must yet have contained 740,319 acres;—almost as much as the whole county of Cornwall!! The absurdity of this is sufficiently manifest; and the 1,500,000 acres claimed for Cornwall in the alledged Survey, could only have been summed up by taking an incorrect and exaggerated measurement or estimate of Cornwall proper, and including Dartmoor forest (80,000 acres) and other Duchy lands, from the county of Devon; or else, as Mr. Whitaker says, by a casual “dash of the pen.”<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> That egregious mistakes have happened, even in modern days, in matters of this nature, I have recently had occasion to ascertain. In the “*Complete System of Geography*,” printed in 1747,—a work in many respects of great merit, Cornwall is made to contain 960,000 acres;—above two hundred thousand acres more than it really includes!

Most, if not all the Accounts of the Scilly Islands, published within the last hundred years, represent St. Mary’s as “about nine or ten miles in circumference.” This has been stated in works not printed twenty years since. By a careful examination I have ascertained that it is not *eight* miles in compass, but I should be sorry to think that any future writer, from this circumstance, should be led to imagine that the Island had been reduced from ten to eight miles in circumference in the course of a few years! Yet something like this error appears in a late “*History of Cornwall*.”—The writer, finding that Leland had said that “Trescaw” was “the biggest of the islettes, in compase a 6 miles or more,” while “St. Mary Isle” was



Having thus set the tradition of the *Lioness* aside, I proceed to consider what testimony

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"a 5 mile or more in cumpace;" adds, "yet this Island," (i. e. Tresco) "now contains only forty families, and is little more than half as large as St. Marys, . . . so much has Trescaw lost of its extent, from the days of Leland to the present time, a period of little more than two centuries and half!" Now, as Leland distinctly notices "St. Mary," "Trescaw," "St. Martines," and "St. Agnes," and says nothing of Bryher or Samson, it is plain that he included one or both of them under the name of Trescaw, to which, indeed, they appear to be joined, and are actually joined at low water. Thus measured or estimated, he might well give them a "cumpace" of "a 6 mile or more," while St. Mary's was but five of his miles in "cumpace."

Another word on the venerable Leland, and to his praise. He says, "*Scylley* is a Kenning, that is to say about an xx miles from the very Westeste Pointe of *Cornwaulle*." At present, the distance between the places here specified is reckoned thirty miles. Leland's miles, therefore, were a mile and a half of modern measurement. If, then, to every mile, as given by him, we add half a mile, we shall find the "cumpace" of "a 5 mile or more," allotted to St. Mary's, amounting to something beyond seven miles and a half, — *agreeing exactly with what I have before stated to be the actual circumference of this Island!* Again; — If, to the six miles by which he measures "Trescaw," we in like manner add six half miles, we shall have nine miles, *which is precisely the circumference of Tresco, Bryher, and Samson!* So accurate was that venerable Historian! — So idle are conclusions hastily drawn from premises ill understood!

present appearances supply as to the ancient state of Scilly.

That the present Islands, or at least many of them, were formerly united, there seem good reasons for believing. There are large tracts of sand, called *flats*, extending from St. Martin's to St Mary's on the south, and to Tresco on the West. Tresco is joined to Bryher, and Bryher to Samson, by similar links. These flats are so dry at low water (spring tides) that from Samson to Bryher and Tresco a man may then pass dry shod;—nearly so from Tresco to St. Martin's; nor would the water reach higher than his knees were he to cross from the latter Island to St. Mary's.—St. Agnes appears to have been always separate from the rest.

It is further deserving of remark, that these sands lie on the inner part of the Islands, towards the Roadstead, in which the depth of water is not more than from two to five fathoms; whilst the outer part of the Islands, which is more immediately exposed to the sea, is guarded with lofty crags and ranges of advanced rocks, having about fifteen fathoms of water *near* the shore, and from twenty to thirty-five fathoms at not a mile's distance from it. The Islands, then, never extended further into the sea; and what has been ravaged from them has only tended to increase

the distance between them, but not to diminish the circuit of the whole.

From the preceding facts alone a strong presumption of the junction of some of these Islands, at a remote and uncertain period, may fairly be entertained; but such an opinion is firmly established from the remains of houses and hedges which are still occasionally discovered, after storms, in the sands connecting Bryher and Samson. Most of those who have written on the Scilly Islands, attribute their present appearance to the convenient, though ill-defined, agency of "some violent convulsion of nature," with hints of an earthquake, a tempest, an inundation, and other destructive phenomena, by which the Islands were rent asunder, lower grounds submerged, and the higher distorted into their present wild and irregular appearance. Thus, amongst others, the learned Dr. Borlase expresses himself in the following manner:

"I was not without hopes," says he, on visiting Scilly, "of finding old towns, old castles, perhaps inscriptions, and works of grandeur; but there is nothing of this kind; the inhabitants are all new comers; not one old habitation, nor any remains of Phœnician or Grecian art, in the ports, castles, towns, *temples*, or sepulchres. We are not to think, however, but that Scilly was really inhabited,

and as frequently resorted to anciently, as the old historians relate. All the Islands, by the remains of hedges, walls, and houses, contiguous to each other, and a number of sepulchral barrows, shew that they have been fully cultivated and inhabited.

“That these Islands were inhabited by the Britons,” he adds, “is past all doubt, not only from their neighbourhood to Britain, but from the Druid monuments, the several rude pillars, circles of stones erect, kistvaens without number, rock basons and tolmens, all monuments common in Cornwall and Wales, equal evidences of the antiquity, religion, and original, of the old inhabitants; they have also many British names at present for their little islands, tenements, karns, and creeks, and more doubtless have been forgotten, or jostled out by modern ones.

“How came these inhabitants, then, it may be asked, to vanish so, as that the present have no pretensions to any affinity, or connection of any kind, either in blood, language, or customs? How came they to disappear, and leave so few traces of trade, plenty, and arts, and no posterity that we can hear of, behind them?

“Two causes of the extinction of the old inhabitants, their habitations, and works of peace, war, and religion, occur to me; the

gradual advances of the sea, and the sudden submersion of the land. The sea is perpetually preying upon these little islands, and leaves nothing where it can reach, but the skeleton, the bared rock."

"To account for these alterations," he says in another place, "the gradual advances and slow depredations of the sea will not suffice; we must therefore either allow that these lands" (*i. e.* those now buried in the sands) "since they were cultivated and built upon, have sunk so much lower than they were before, or we must allow, that since these lands were fenced in and cultivated, and the houses built and other works raised, which are now under water, the whole ocean has been raised as to its surface sixteen feet and more in perpendicular height; which latter supposition will appear to the learned without doubt much the harder of the two. I conclude therefore" says he, "that these Islands have undergone some great catastrophe; and *besides the apparent diminution of their islets by sea and tempest*, must have suffered greatly by a subsidence of the land, (the common consequence of earthquakes) attended by a sudden inundation in those parts where the above-mentioned ruins, fences, mines, and other things of which we have no vestiges now remaining, formerly stood. This inundation probably destroyed

many of the ancient inhabitants, and so terrified those who survived, and had wherewithal to support themselves elsewhere, that they forsook these Islands; by which means the people who were the aborigines, and corresponded so long with the Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans, were reduced to the last gasp. The few poor remains of the desolation might soon lose sight of their ancient prosperity and eminence, by their necessary attention to food and raiment; no easy acquisitions, when their low lands, ports, and towns, were overwhelmed by the sea."

This hypothesis certainly is ingenious, and stated and maintained with great ability; yet I trust I shall not be accused of temerity when I own that it does not appear to me inconcussible,—at least in those parts that relate to the "earthquake," the "inundation," and the "great catastrophe." The Horatian law, "*Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus*," is equally applicable to philosophical investigations as to dramatic compositions; and, notwithstanding the Doctor's assertion, I hope to prove,—or at least to establish the probability,—that *one* primary, visible, and certain cause, in constant action for so many hundreds of years as have elapsed since the Deluge, has effected, or been connected with, all the changes which have taken place in the ap-

pearance of the Scilly Islands from the time of Noah's Flood.

1. England could never have been properly described as subject to earthquakes. What has been felt there, of this nature, might rather be termed shocks of earthquakes than real visitations deserving that name. No instances are recorded, or handed down by tradition, of hills having been overturned, or towns swallowed up, in that Island, by those dreadful convulsions of nature. It is probable, therefore, from the laws and materials of the natural world, that no event ever happened in any district of the globe, which has not been repeated, or in some manner imitated.

2. When any submersion of the land takes place in consequence of an earthquake on the sea-coast, a cavity is formed, wide and deep, and filled by the surrounding water. Thus, in Jamaica, the old town of Port Royal is cast down so far, that ships drop anchor amongst the houses of the drowned district, and ride securely forty or fifty feet above their roofs. In Scilly, on the contrary, the flats (as has been observed before) are *dry* at low water, and have never more than about fourteen or sixteen feet of water over them.

3. The constant action of the sea, increased sometimes by its violent agitation during storms, is sufficient to explain every appear-

ance connected with the sands at Scilly. It is agreed on all sides that the submerged land was originally low,—perhaps only a few feet above the level of the sea at high water. Its breadth, also, was probably inconsiderable, like that of the *isthmus* or necks which unite the Hugh to St. Mary's, and the Gugh to St. Agnes. During the prevalence of storms, the sea, rising higher than usual, might make a breach over those necks, (as it has done twice at St. Mary's, and continues to do, every spring tide, at St. Agnes) when, by carrying away in its recess a small proportion, perhaps almost imperceptible, from their surfaces, it prepared the way for further attacks and more extensive conquests. What was carried off at every ebb, was deposited along the shore, or in front of the ravaged tracts, thus forming a gentle ascent for waters urged only by the most moderate tides. Succeeding storms, occurring in the course of many centuries, completed the desolation of the lower lands and the demarcation of the Isles, by spreading the wreck of the different necks in those broad and level plains which they now present to the eye. This work, as I before observed, is still going on, surely though gradually, at St. Agnes; and it is also to be feared that, within a few years (unless timely measures are taken to prevent such a dreadful calamity) St. Mary's



will be divided into two distinct Islands, and the inhabitants of Hugh Town, or at least those who reside in the lower part of it, will share the fate supposed to have befallen the aborigines of the off-islands.<sup>d</sup>

Not only the lower shores, but even the more elevated coasts of the islands, have certainly suffered much, during the lapse of centuries, from the aggressions of the sea; which, by undermining the soil, has strewed the margin of the land with numerous immense stones, which were once imbedded many feet above the reach of the waves. Many ponderous blocks may still be seen jutting from the ground, in different places, as if about to tumble at the next surge. Indeed, the fresh appearance of the earthy cliffs sufficiently proves that they have not long been exposed to the air. Yet, on the other hand, it may be observed, that the stones and fragments of earth, so detached, bear so small a proportion to what remains compact; that though it is but

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<sup>d</sup> I have been informed that the sea has incroached, within the memory of man, over some fields at St. Mary's, lying near the marshes, which are regularly overflowed every winter. If, however, the banks or sea-fences were properly kept up, no danger need be feared. Of their present miserably-dilapidated state, and the best means of repairing them, much more will be found in the chapter exclusively relating to that Island.

reasonable to suppose that each of the islands formerly clothed with soil and verdure those beds of stones which every receding tide discovers at its base; and that those rocky and dangerous points which project in so many directions, are but the wrecks of former little hills;—yet the Islands may remain habitable and productive until the end of all things.

However, while I contend that the sea has been the *principal* agent in producing the changes that have occurred around the shores of Scilly;—I wish to have it understood that those other means which may be said to act generally on the surface of the earth, must be considered to have contributed also to the mutations which these Islands have doubtless undergone. Amongst those means may be enumerated not only the air, which wears away and alters the forms of even the hardest bodies, and the perpetual pressure of which, on the different substances and unequal surface of the earth, must necessarily have been productive of great alterations during the revolutions of centuries,—but also the continued change of seasons and their phænomena,—heat and cold, rain and storms, fire and vapours; by which, rocks have been shivered, hills wasted, vallies filled, towns destroyed, the course of rivers turned, and almost every form and substance on the face of the earth

distorted and remodelled. Human labours also,—which, though comparatively of small account, are yet, by long operation, capable of effecting great and even unintentional alterations,—may have contributed much towards changing the external appearance of the earth in different parts, by hewing quarries, felling woods, heaping mounds, levelling roads, forming bays, or other works suggested by convenience or necessity. A mere enumeration of those causes may probably help conjecture to explain the present state of the Scilly Islands, without recurring to the hypotheses of earthquakes and volcanoes, which probably never operated to any considerable extent in this part of the world.

Without presuming to speak decisively on the causes of the extinction of the ancient inhabitants of these Isles, I may yet observe that the solution of that question by Dr. Borlase and others, appears to me as unsatisfactory as it is melancholy. A difficulty of considerable magnitude appears at the outset:—If the aborigines of Scilly and the Phœnician traders who established themselves here, were totally swallowed up by an earthquake or drowned by an inundation—(which yet seems a strange supposition, considering how much firm land still remains)—must we resort to the same machinery to account for the disappearance of the Phœnicians from *Cornwall*? That

the trade in tin extended to that county in very early ages, is warmly contended for, by many writers, and, in every view, is highly probable. Yet I know of no vestiges of Phœnician towns or Phœnician art in that province, and it would be rather over-straining an hypothesis to suppose that earthquake and inundation were there employed to exterminate all remains of the times of old, as is fancied to have been the case in Scilly. Perhaps the extinction of the former inhabitants of these Islands may be explained by the following supposition: The Phœnicians, imagining that they had nearly exhausted the mineral treasures of this part of the world, voluntarily returned to their own shores, as did the Greeks and Romans soon after them; and the Danes and other piratical people, in their subsequent descents on the coasts of Scilly and Cornwall, might have destroyed whatever monuments of ancient fame they found here,—massacred many of the natives,—taken others captive,—and compelled those who escaped their barbarities, to seek refuge in Britain.—I do not offer this as a perfect hypothesis, but as one that bears a strong face of probability, and by which the difficulties of that advanced by Borlase are evaded.\*

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\* The names of the present race of inhabitants of Scilly, are chiefly Cornish and Devonian; and it would seem

From what has been stated, then, it appears,—that Scilly was never joined to Cornwall, though it bears a strong resemblance to that county in its soils and products;—that great changes in the appearance and dimensions of some of the Islands have taken place since they were first known to the ancients;—but that there are not sufficient grounds for believing that those changes were effected by any extraordinary convulsions of nature, but chiefly by the continued and powerful action of the elements, especially of the sea.

It now remains for me briefly to notice the other subjects which fall under the head of natural history.

The soil of Scilly, though sandy, is generally good, especially at St. Mary's; and, were

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that a few individuals, settling here within the last two centuries, have almost peopled the whole of the inhabited Islands. Of the name of *Jenkin* there are, altogether, about forty families; of *Ellis*, thirty-five families; *Hicks*, thirty; *Pendar*, twenty-seven; *Woodcock*, twenty-five; *Odger*, twenty; *Ashford*, seventeen; *Webber*, twelve; and *Gibson*, eight families. One half of the inhabitants of ST. AGNES are of the same name—*Hicks*. One quarter of those of TRESCO, and one third of those of BRYHER, are called *Jenkin*. Above one fourth of those of ST. MARTIN'S, have the surname, *Ellis*; and another fourth, that of *Ashford*. SAMSON has only two names amongst seven families. At ST. MARY'S, of course, a much greater diversity of cognominations prevails.

proper means adopted, and suitable encouragement given for inclosing and cultivating land, that Island would supply agricultural produce sufficient for the maintenance of double the amount of its present population. I have seen many acres which have not been inclosed more than two years, in the first of which they produced excellent crops of potatoes, and in the second, very fine barley. Considerable expence, however, must be incurred in breaking up a piece of ground, and clearing the stones which are generally strewed over its surface; but these again are serviceable for building cottages or out-houses, and making hedges, some of the latter of which, in Scilly, have more the appearance of fortifications than of fences.

The Off-Islands are not so prolific as St. Mary's, and, in the most fruitful seasons, seldom produce more than is sufficient for the consumption of the inhabitants for two-thirds of the year: But agriculture on most of those Islands, might well be extended; and, indeed, has been extended in the course of the last two years, in some degree. At Tresco, while there are not above five hundred acres of ground in cultivation, about six hundred acres still lie waste; two-thirds of which, at least, are capable of improvement. What ground is cultivated at Scilly, is never suffered to lie

fallow, and is further impoverished by being insufficiently manured. The principal dressing is sea-weed. The implements of husbandry used in Scilly are much the same as those of Cornwall, but rather of worse construction.

The chief vegetable productions of Scilly are wheat, barley, rye, pillas, and potatoes. The latter are of very superior quality to most in England, whither considerable quantities of them are annually exported, as well as to Gibraltar, and the West Indies. Most kinds of vegetables, common in England, grow here, as well as fruits and flowers. Various physical and fragrant herbs, especially such as are found in Cornwall, grow wild on several of the Islands. The sea-poppy,—a plant much esteemed for many medicinal virtues,—is found here in great abundance. The samphire is of peculiar excellence. Garlick is much cultivated, although it also grows wild. The eringo, or sea-holly, is very plentiful; and camomile is abundant on most of the hills and downs.

Black cattle are small; and the flesh, in general, is not of so fine a grain as in England, nor will it bear salting so well; but the quality of the meat, of course, depends much on the food of the animal, which, in the Off-Islands, consist in a great measure of sea-weed!

The horses are small, and generally poor, their chief food being the furze which they find on the hills, and which they carefully bruise with the fore-hoof before manducation : Yet I have been assured that both cows and horses, by custom, acquire such a relish for these peculiar and *piquant* articles of food, that they pine when deprived of them ! Many cattle, however, actually die in the winter, especially on the Off-Islands, through hunger.

The sheep are of a peculiar breed, similar to some that I have observed on the Western Islands of Scotland ; they are small, but high on the hinder legs, with long, thin, ragged tails. The mutton is often very sweet. Of hogs there are great numbers on all the principal Islands ; but such of those animals as belong to the poor are in general fed on ore-weed, limpets, &c. which gives the flesh a disagreeable redness, and a very unpalatable, fishy taste. There are no hares on the Islands, nor are rabbits so plentiful as formerly.

Poultry, of different kinds, may be obtained here occasionally, but generally in a small and lean state. A goose seldom weighs more than five pounds and a half, and other fowl are in proportion.<sup>1</sup> Wild fowl of all sorts resort here

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<sup>1</sup> For the prices of the different articles of food, see the Chap. on St Mary's, Part II.



in great plenty during the winter; and there are numerous land and sea-birds on the different Islands, including curlews, gulls, gannets, herons, herinshaws, looms, merricks, seapies, &c. Wild geese and swans frequent these Isles also in winter. Of land-birds there are linnets, gold-finches, thrushes, black-birds, larks, lapwings, cuckoos, sparrows, snipes, woodcocks,\* plovers, widgeons, partridges, teals: crows, kites, hawks, owls, &c. but the choicer sorts of birds are scarce. The puffin, once so plentiful on these Islands, is now seldom found. (It is here, as in Cornwall, called the *pope* ! )

The fish are numerous in species, large in size, and excellent in flavour; but by no means so plentiful as formerly. The chief fish found near the Islands are turbot, cod, ling, sole, mackarel, plaice, mullet, hake, polluck, whiting-polluck, eel, and pilchard. The conger-eels are very large and heavy. There are

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\* A singular circumstance has been remarked with respect to these birds, which, during the prevalence of strong gales in a direction varying from East to North, are generally found here before they are discovered in England, and are first seen about the Eastern Islands and the neighbouring cliffs. May not this circumstance tend to elucidate the enquiries of the naturalist relative to their migration? On their arrival at Scilly they are mostly in an exhausted state, and fly low.

also numerous kinds of smaller fish caught and salted by the natives for Winter-consumption; such as bass, wrass, chad, scad, smelts, sprat, brit, barne, cuddle, *whistlers*, &c. These are included by the Islanders under the general name of rock-fish. Several sharks, of a small size, have been found near the Islands during the Summer-months of the last few years. Numbers of porpoises are commonly seen in the sounds in blowing weather.—Of the testaceous kinds are craw-fish, lobsters, crabs, shrimps, periwinkles, and limpets. There are but few muscles, and no oysters, at Scilly.

Neither viper, adder, toad, or other venomous creature is to be found here; but there are many rats (chiefly of the black kind) on the Off-Islands, and mice at St. Mary's. Some authors have mentioned cock-roaches as plentiful in Scilly, but I have never been able to see one; and I believe that the species, if it ever existed here, is nearly extinct.

The air, being strongly impregnated with saline effluvia, is peculiarly brisk and healthful; but (judging from my own experience) I believe that strangers may find it productive of heaviness in the head and eyes,—causing what is called a swimming in the former, and weighing down the latter as if to sleep. I know of no disease or complaint which may be noticed as prevalent in the Islands, or

peculiar to them; yet I have observed different degrees of *amentia* in rather numerous subjects. The natives are generally healthy, strong, and long-lived. Fourscore years may be taken as the average term of life here; but it is a melancholy statement, which I have frequently heard, and believe to be correct, that for one man who dies a natural death, nine are drowned!<sup>a</sup>

The climate of Scilly is very mild; in proof of which it may be sufficient to state that an American aloe, in the garden of the Lieut. Governor, in the Garrison, has blossomed in the open air. It is never so cold here in winter, nor so hot in summer, as in England. Frosts seldom happen unless in a perfect calm, and a thaw generally takes place two or three hours after sunrise. Snow never lies on the ground more than two or three days. Generally speaking the weather, here, is very dry throughout the year, and much more so than in Cornwall. Here being no mountains

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<sup>a</sup> Many distressing instances of this kind occurred during the long prevalence of stormy weather at the close of 1821. None of the Island boats, even of the largest class, is decked;—hence the irruption of a heavy sea is almost a sure token of instant destruction. The large sloop sails, also, so generally adopted, are incompatible with a due regard to safety in the Winter season.

to attract the clouds, there is consequently but little rain. Even when the showers at Penzance have been described as floods, not a drop has fallen here. This great drought is in some measure unfriendly to agriculture, the lightness of the soil requiring frequent showers. The sultry heats of summer are assuaged and tempered by the cool and salubrious breezes which arise from the sea on every side, bearing health and vigour on their winds. Perhaps the time will come, in Scilly's better days, when it shall have received the numerous improvements of which it is capable, when these Islands shall be preferred to foreign shores by those who, in quest of health and renovation, have been accustomed to look to a long and expensive voyage to a distant land.

It must be confessed that in the summer months the air is rendered disagreeable, especially to strangers, by the effluvia arising from the burning of sea weed for making kelp, the smell of which is highly offensive. But much of the present inconvenience might be obviated by a regulation enforcing the burning of weeds only on those sides of the Island opposite to the wind, so that the smoke might be carried off to sea. On this subject, more will be found in a succeeding portion of this work. (See Chap. V.)

Water is rather scarce, especially such as is desirable for drinking. There are no streams, and but few springs, in any of the Islands; yet there are some good wells in St Mary's and large ponds in Tresco, Bryher, and St. Agnes. The inhabitants are very careful in saving rain-water for domestic purposes, but in summer very little rain falls here. Perhaps by clearing out old wells, and sinking others, a more abundant supply of that useful element might be obtained. There are no chalybeate springs in the Islands.

In the evenings and nights of autumn, a beautiful phenomenon may be observed in the seas around Scilly, the waters of which, when disturbed by the plashing of the oars in rowing, twinkle with great rapidity and uncommon brilliance. Whether these coruscations proceed from marine animals or plants, or from a property in the water itself, is a point on which naturalists are not agreed, and which, indeed, does not appear easy of solution. The *effect*, however, of these luminous appearances is peculiarly pleasing.

The fine sand with which the roads and many other parts of the Islands are covered, is particularly inconvenient. In the summer it dazzles the eyes by its incessant glare: In winter, being furiously blown in the face by the boisterous gales prevalent in that season,

it stings like a nettle. This sand, and the spray of the sea, are also very injurious to woollen cloaths, especially black, and to hats, which they render brown and rusty in a short time. Most of the Gentlemen on the Islands, therefore, wear straw hats or cloth caps in summer.

The winds here are generally fresh, and often violent. By those who have kept journals it has been found that not more than six days of perfect calm occur in the course of a year. During one half of the year the wind blows from Westerly points, that is say, between South - West and North - West; and these winds are generally strong. Storms often arise almost suddenly, and last long; and the inhabitants, having no protection of trees, nor aught that might intercept their violence, feel their effects very sensibly. Yet in summer the appearance of the sea and sky is delightful; and the view of the sun, slowly sinking in the Western wave at the utmost verge of the horizon, is calculated to excite feelings of the purest pleasure and the most sublime devotion.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the Reader will excuse the following attempt to convey some idea of this interesting sight, in a manner that may be thought more agreeable to the subject than the unvarnished details of prose.

## SUNSET AT SCILLY.

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### I.

My soul is full of splendour! and mine eye,—  
(O'erpow'red and dazzled with excessive light)—  
Shrinks back, some mildly-soothing point to spy  
Amidst the silver-spangled robe of Night.

### II.

For I have seen—( whilst, wide around, the spray  
In folds incessant joyed the shores to lave; )  
The glorious Potentate that rules the day,  
Wheel his bright chariot down th' Atlantic wave.

### III.

Hence, —though I long, by varied toils oppressed,  
Have ceased to wake the harp's neglected string;—  
Again the kindling ardour fires my breast,  
And all within me bids me soar and sing.

### IV.

But O! what music can such throbs impart  
Through the dull channel of the sordid ear,  
As that which thrills and fills th' expanded heart,—  
Struck up by light, and sung by ev'ry sphere!

### V.

Yet wake, my harp! —awake a solemn strain;—  
(Such strain may such a subject best besecm; )  
And charm—if aught can charm—my present pain,  
With flights descriptive, suited to the theme.

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### VI.

The west-wind rippled the dilating surge,—  
(A shivered mirror!) and disturbed the glare  
That, when no gales old Ocean's bosom urge,  
Settles in vast and dazzling richness there.

VII.

Before me smiled the wide-expanded main,—  
 Concealing snares and death!—like worldly smiles!—  
 And,—dotting thick the azure-tinted plain,—  
 On either side, brown rocks and swelling Isles.

VIII.

Above, amidst the pure cerulean blue,  
 Light, silken clouds, in forms fantastic bent,  
 Displayed, to fond Imagination's view,  
 Bright Isles and rocks, to stud the firmament!

IX.

The sun was in his strength: Though oft enshrined  
 Midst those fine folds, in varied beauties bright,—  
 Oft, through the slender texture, unconfined,  
 Streamed the full blaze of Eve's empurpled light.

X.

He looked not on the Earth:—His slanting ray,  
 Upward directed, only sought the sky:  
 Earth had no charms to woo his longer stay;—  
 Beauty had fixed her 'witching seat on high:

XI.

There, o'er the realms of majesty and grace,  
 She reigned confessed; and, through the ethereal scene,  
 The eye of Contemplation well might trace  
 Whate'er was lovely, glorious, or serene.

XII.

The lucid masses, tinted by the rays  
 That gave the whole one animated glow,—  
 Or, burnished to the Sun's effulgent blaze,  
 Or with soft blushes tinged their wreaths of snow!

XIII.

And Fancy saw on each a genial sprite,—  
 (To Virtue ministrant)—with airy tone  
 Of mimic harp, chaunting the praise of Light  
 In strains to all but Virtue's few, unknown.



## XIV.

Descending on his bright, celestial way,  
The Monarch of the day stood o'er the wave;—  
The conscious water reddened to his ray,  
And heaved on high, his chariot-wheels to lave!

## XV.

And now, as, touching the horizon's verge,  
The brilliant Orb, ling'ring with fond delay,  
Prepared beyond its limits to immerge,  
And light and heat to other lands convey;—

## XVI.

The congregating vapours, gath'ring round,  
Curtained the glowing bosom of the West,—  
As if by fond, officious duty bound  
To guard the spot that led him to his rest!

## XVII.

Each instant, novel tints, that kindly beamed,—  
Darting obliquely through each silken fold,—  
A mingled ray of warmth and lustre streamed,—  
Gracing their crimson skirts with living gold!

## XVIII.

Majestic and serene—as Saints descend  
The silent precincts of the hallowed grave,—  
I saw his disk its parting beam extend,  
Then, placid sink beneath the thrilling wave!—

## XIX.

Emblem, how just!—the SUN again shall rise,—  
Again shall charm creation with his ray;—  
The SAINT shall re-appear!—ascend the skies,  
And shine amidst the blaze of endless day!

## CHAPTER IV.

## OF THE CIVIL, MILITARY, AND ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT OF THE SCILLY ISLANDS.

*Scilly not a part of the Duchy of Cornwall by authority.—Grant of the Islands by William III. to Lord Godolphin.—Powers of the Lord Proprietor.—Civil and Military command of the Islands not always held by the same Person.—The Duke's Council, or Twelve Men, how chosen.—Changes in the constitution of this Court.—The Lord Proprietor the civil and military Governor.—Whimsical awards of the Court.—Present Military Establishment.—Revenue Department.—Ecclesiastical state of the Islands.—Secular Canons appointed here by Edward III. Chapels built on most of the Islands after the Reformation.—One Clergyman only resident at Scilly till lately.—Missionaries and Schools of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*

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**IT** has before been stated that if Scilly appertains to the Duchy of Cornwall, it is rather by

favour than by authority, as it does not appear by any records to have ever been so annexed. By the several grants extant, the Islanders are "subject only to the laws of their own Court of Civil Judicature, in all matters of debt, trespass, or property in dispute; the High-Sheriff for the County of Cornwall having no authority in Scilly," says Heath, "except by permission of the Lord Proprietor thereof."\*

In the year 1698, King William the third granted to Sidney Lord Godolphin all those His Majesty's Islands, territories, and rocks, commonly called the Isles of *Scilley*, with all sounds, harbours, and sands within the circuit of the said Isles; and all lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, grounds, feedings fishings, fishing places, mines of tin, lead, and coals, and all profits of the same, and full power to dig, work, and mine in the premises; and also

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\* Yet at present the Cornish Magistrates of the hundred of Penwith claim and exercise a jurisdiction over the Islands, and to their adjudication most of the disputed questions in cases of wreck and salvage are referred, though at great inconvenience to the parties whose personal attendance is in such cases required. Some of the Attornies, too, of the neighbourhood of Penzance, adopt a summary method of recovering small debts from the poor Islanders, by subjecting them to the visitation of a bailiff, and the misery and expence of a proceeding by *distress*. This requires regulation.

all the marshes, void grounds, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions, services, and all other profits, rights, commodities, advantages, and emoluments within the said Isles; and a moiety of all ship-wreck, the other moiety to be received by the Lord High Admiral. The King also granted all his *Liberties, Franchises, Authorities* and *Jurisdictions*, as had before been used in the said Islands; and full power to hear, examine, and finally determine all complaints, suits, matters, actions, controversies, contentions, and demands whatever, moved or depending between party and party inhabiting the said Isles. ( All heresies, treasons, matters touching life, or member of man, or title of land; and also all controversies and causes touching ships, and other things belonging to the High Court of Admiralty, always excepted.) To hold to the said Lord Godolphin for a term of eighty-nine years, ( from the year 1700 to 1798 ) at the annual rent of forty pounds; the grant to be void at the King's pleasure, if the rent should be unpaid two months after due. It was further granted that the said Sidney Lord Godolphin might receive yearly, at the King's price, one last of gunpowder (paying ready money for the same); and that the said Lord, his executors and assigns, might take up and press his and their own tenants, tanners, and servants, to serve

the King under the said Sidney Lord Godolphin, his executors, administrators, and assigns, within the said Islands, territories, and rocks, in time of war. It was also covenanted that the said Lord Godolphin should not alienate or dispose of his Lease without the consent of His Majesty or his successors. The King's ratification declares that notwithstanding any misrecital or non-recital of the articles contained in the former leases of Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First, it was His Majesty's pleasure that all and singular the rights and privileges thereof should be continued unto the said Sidney Lord Godolphin.

I have been the more particular in making this abstract of the grant of King William, because I understand it is the model of that now held by the Duke of Leeds.

It would appear from this, according to what Heath has before observed, "that these Islands are under an Admiralty Jurisdiction; and that the Lord Proprietor, for the time being, is empowered to erect a court of civil judicature for hearing and determining all plaints suits, trespasses, controversies, tumults, &c. And, by virtue of his power given, can deligate his authority, by assigning a Magistrate to preside over that court, reserving his judgment in appeals." This is also agreeable

to the opinion of Counsel, for Mr. Green, whom the late Francis Lord Godolphin was in the habit of consulting on the business of these Islands, says, in one of his letters ( dated 21st March, 1759 ) “ As you are the sole Proprietor of these Islands, the inhabitants are your tenants, and claim your protection as such. I also think that the power given to you by the Crown, and by you delegated to the Council, ( consisting of twelve men ) sufficiently authorizes them to hear and determine controversies and disputes.” It is, however, to be regretted, that the power of the Council do not appear sufficiently established to enable them to administer justice in every case, and there has long been a jealousy between those executing the civil and the military functions, as to pre-eminence in the Council of Twelve. “ The Governors having the military power,” says Heath, “ were not always Proprietors, holding the civil jurisdiction, for Major Bennett was Governor of Scilly while the present Earl of Godolphin<sup>b</sup> was only Proprietor: His Lordship thinking this an infringement on his authority, had a commission as Governor, bearing date July 7, 1733, and has been Governor, and Proprietor of the Islands ever since.” Application was made to his Lord-

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<sup>b</sup> This was written in the year 1760.

ship, in 1736, for the establishment of the civil power in the Islands; and in the course of the correspondence to which this subject gave rise, it appeared; That Sir Francis Godolphin, when Proprietor of these Islands, vested the civil power in twelve inhabitants, to whom he gave proper instructions; but that these, as well as the other ancient records of the court, had been lost:—That the Governor had, from time to time, assisted the common-council of the Islands in determining such matters as were brought before them:—That the courts wherein causes were tried and determined, were held in the name of the Earl of Godolphin, as lessee of the Crown. That in case of the death of any member of the council, two of the principal inhabitants of the Island of St. Mary's were put in nomination to supply the deficiency, one of whom was elected by a majority of the members. No oath of office was formerly taken, but the council had recently adopted one of their own accord, the nature of which was, to bind themselves to vote to the best of their judgment in all cases brought before them. In a subsequent declaration (1739) it was stated that the civil power of these Islands, under Lord Godolphin, had been from time immemorial for his Majesty's service, and for the well-governing, peace, and safety of the inhabitants, and was

lodged in the commanding officer and the twelve men for the time being.

In consequence of the death of Lord Godolphin, the commandant of the garrison, in a memorial dated April 26th, 1766, declares the "council prorogued, if not dissolved," until confirmed anew by Lord Godolphin's successor, and recommends it to the members to state their circumstances to his Lordship. This they did, and another long and fatiguing correspondence ensued, which those who are *curious* in such matters may find faithfully recorded by Mr. Troutbeck. The result was, that his Lordship, by a writing dated the 10th of June, in the same year, confirmed and established, (as far as his power extended) unto the twelve men, or Common council, of St. Mary's, all their ancient rights, privileges, and customs. The commandant declined to act as president, and, in consequence, no business was for a long time transacted. This was stated to the Lord Proprietor by the council, in a letter dated December 3rd, 1767, in which they also prayed to be put on a more sure and permanent establishment;—to be indemnified for their acts that were not inconsistent with, or contrary to, the known laws and statutes of the realm;—and to receive instructions for their guidance in case any future commanding officer of the garrison should not chuse to act



as president of the court. In 1769 his Lordship sent a summary if not an expeditious answer to the petition of the council, by appointing John Mitchell, gentleman, his steward on the Islands, president of the council in the absence of Captain Græme, the military commanding officer before mentioned, and the business of the court proceeded as before.

“ In consequence of some complaints against the partial proceedings of the council-men, who were all near related to each other,” says Troutbeck, “ Lord Godolphin thought proper to dissolve the council, and appointed others to have the administration of justice, who were not connected with the natives either by affinity or consanguinity, that all culprits might meet with the due reward of their deeds, and that insolence, which was come to a great height, might be suppressed.” Of this council the commander resident of the garrison was appointed president.

On the death of Lord Godolphin, in 1786, the Marquis of Carmarthen, his successor, (now Duke of Leeds) appointed another council, and constituted Lieutenant Colonel Dawson, its president.

In 1791, His Grace the Duke of Leeds, being then at Scilly, added two members to fill up the vacancies then in the council, and appointed Thomas Phillips, esq. his Grace's steward, deputy-president.

From what has already been stated, as well as from the constitution of subsequent courts down to the present time, it appears that the Duke of Leeds, as Governor of Scilly, holds there both a civil and military authority; and the resident Lieutenant Governor, or military commandant, has generally acted in the same two-fold capacity. The court at present existing is composed of the military commanding officer, the Agent of the Duke of Leeds, his Grace's resident chaplain, the collector of customs, the comptroller, and seven other inhabitants of St. Mary's. The court holds its sittings on the last Saturday in every month. Although offences which, by the common law are punishable with transportation, or even with a still severer penalty, have sometimes been tried here; yet the only punishments inflicted by the court are fine, whipping, and imprisonment; to which was formerly super-added the ducking stool, for refractory and obstreperous females.\*

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\* Some of the sentences awarded by former courts on different offenders (extracted from the industrious *Frontbeck*) may, perhaps, excite the reader's smile :

1. " January 28th, 1712. Ann Holiday was accused of stealing out of the house of Mr. Thomas Smith, sundry articles, which were found in her possession. It was ordered that she should be bound to the common whip-

Although the agent of the Duke of Leeds enjoys jurisdiction as a *local* magistrate, he

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ping-post, and there receive *forty four stripes!* which order," he very coolly adds, "*was executed!*"

2. "February 13th, 1713. An order of the council was given out, to prohibit all masters of ships or boats to import any strangers to settle here, or to carry any person from these islands, under the penalty of ten pounds!"

3. "January 27th, 1714. Thomas Barks, a soldier, was accused and found guilty of *forcibly breaking into the house of Joan Legg, in the night, and committing a rape on her body;* for which the council ordered him—to be *publicly whipped!*!!!

4. "October 29th, 1720. Robert Mac Limeric complained against John Tregear, for furiously assaulting him with a mill-staff, breaking his head, wounding him in the face, and spilling his blood; which being confirmed by sufficient evidence, the council having deliberately weighed the damages done to him the said Robert Mac Limeric, by shedding his blood, did award and order John Tregear to pay him *six shillings and eight pence!* and the like sum to the poor of the parish."

5. "December 31st, 1743. Edmund Lahey was *fined one shilling,* for *behaving rudely and swearing* before the court!"

6. "July 2nd, 1744. Two women being accused of disorderly practices, were sentenced by the court to be *ducked at the quay-head, and purified in salt water!*"

7. "September 24th, 1757. James Child was accused by James Thomas, of *fraudulently taking* one of his sheep, which by strong circumstances appeared to be true. The court recommended the parties to *settle the matter between themselves,* and James Child agreed to pay James Thomas *nine shillings* for the sheep. *The said James Child was*

has not the power of commitment to any of the prisons in England. It would be necessary, therefore, in cases of murder or other capital offences, that the accused should be taken to Penzance, and committed to the county jail by the Cornish justices. — The want of an established and well-defined civil power at Scilly, is extremely inconvenient to all classes of the inhabitants, and highly deserving the attention of the Government and the Legislature.

The *military command* of the Islands appears to be in the appointment of the Commander in Chief of the army. The present establishment at St. Mary's consists of a lieut. governor (holding the rank of major general,) a master gunner, and four other gunners. There are also two or three aged serjeants residing in the garrison. The store-keeper and barrack-master were lately reduced, under the existing system of military retrenchment.—There are no soldiers doing duty on the Off-Islands.

In the *revenue department* there are a col-

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*judged by the court, incapable of keeping any fire-arms, or any other offensive weapons in his house, during the present war; and that he shall be careful to go into the garrison whenever the warning-gun shall be fired, and if he neglects, he is immediately to be taken into custody, and used as—A TRAITOR”!!!*

—“*Ohe! jam satis est!*”

lector of the customs ( who is also agent to the Trinity House for St. Agnes' Light ) a comptroller, surveyor, an officer of excise, &c. There is also a *preventive water guard* established on the five principle Islands, consisting of an inspecting Commander (holding also the rank of captain in the Royal Navy) five chief officers or sitters, and about thirty other men, provided with suitable boats, watch-houses, arms, &c. for the prevention of smuggling, which was formerly carried on to a great extent on these Islands.

From what has been advanced in a preceding chapter, it appears that, whatever be the *civil* constitution of these Islands, the *ecclesiastical authority* in them has been held, from the time of Athelstan, by the Bishops of Exeter, by whom the powers granted from the Crown to the abbots of Tavistock, in Scilly, were confirmed. The Islands, however, have neither episcopal nor archidiaconal visitation, nor does the rite of confirmation appear to have been at any time administered to the natives.<sup>d</sup> —A brief historical retrospect,

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<sup>d</sup> I have great pleasure, however, in being enabled to state that the present learned and pious Bishop of Exeter (Dr. W. Carey) has personally signified to me his Lordship's intention of visiting this part of his Diocese at an early period.

in addition to what has already been incidentally mentioned, may serve to explain the origin, and to account for the existence, of many of the anomalies in the spiritual affairs of Scilly.

The possessions and influence of the monks on these Islands, have before been mentioned. By a grant of Edward the Third, agreeable to a petition presented to that monarch from the abbot and convent of Tavistock, two *secular* canons, or chaplains, were appointed to perform divine service at Scilly, during the time of war, instead of the two monks by whom that duty had previously been discharged. On the suppression of monastic institutions by Henry the Eighth, it is probable that those secular chaplains were recalled to England, About thirty years afterwards, the Islands were granted by Elizabeth, on lease to the honourable Francis Godolphin, by whose descendants most of the present chapels or churches were built. But it does not appear that any clergyman of the reformed Church was engaged for any other Island than that of St. Mary's; where, it would seem, the administration of the rites and ceremonies of the church were exclusively performed.\* Even

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\* This is expressly asserted by Troutbeck, who says, "Formerly the Lord-Proprietor's chaplain was the only

when Heath's account of Scilly was printed (A.D. 1750) there was no other clergyman on the Islands than a chaplain at St. Mary's who, however, had neither institution, induction, nor visitation, from the Bishop; holding his appointment at the will of the Lord Proprietor, and receiving the keys of the church from his agent. The Off-Island churches were only supplied by four of the native fishermen, who were appointed by the agent to read prayers and sermons agreeable to the doctrines of the Church of England.

At present the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge employs two clergymen here, one of whom resides in the Mission House, at Tresco, and the other on St. Mary's. When, through the prevalence of storms, or other

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clergyman upon all the Islands, which was attended with great inconvenience in many respects, particularly to the inhabitants on the off-islands, who were then obliged to bring their children over sea to St. Mary's church to be baptized, and many times at the risk of their lives." This information, however, is only of comparatively recent date:—Leland notes a melancholy disaster which happened a little before his own time, through this means.

"The Isle of St. Agnes," says he, "was desolatid by this chaunce, in *recenti hominum memoria*. The hole numbre almost of v households that were yn this Isle, came to a marriage or a fest into St. Mary Isle, and going homeward were all drownid."

causes, those missionaries are unable to attend their respective churches, the service is performed there by the clerks, as above mentioned. The Society also supports schools on all the principle Islands; and, by the distribution of Bibles, Prayer-Books, and other religious and valuable works, has chiefly been instrumental in promoting that state of morality which so eminently distinguishes the Islanders.<sup>1</sup> Between four and five hundred pounds are expended annually by the Society on the missions and schools here, as will be more particularly noticed under the accounts of the different Islands.

By most of the writers on Cornish History, the churches at Scilly are called *chapels of ease*. But if they be so, those writers would do well to point out their mother church! By the natives, each island is considered as a parish of itself. The churchwardens (of whom there are two on each of the five principal Islands) do not attend the Archdeacon's visitations, but are sworn in at the court of the Lord Proprietor.

The tythes of the Islands are received by the agent on the part of the Lord Proprietor, in whose grant they are included. The sur-

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<sup>1</sup> See more of this in the next chapter.



plice fees are paid to his Grace's chaplain, the minister of St. Mary's, by whom the registers of the different Islands are kept.

CHAPTER V.

*Manners of the Scilly Islanders.—Dialects.—State of Education, Religion, and Morality.—Attachment of the Scillonians to their native Isles.—Their loyalty.—Affected Independence.—Superiority of their character to that of the English Poor.—Dress.—Employments of the Islanders.—The process of Kelp-making described.—Improvements recommended.—Piloting.—Skill and Enterprise of the Islanders in rendering Assistance to Vessels in Distress.—Often inadequately rewarded.—Casualties attendant on this Employment.—A Plan proposed for adjusting disputed Claims of Salvage.—Hardships experienced by the Islanders under the present System of Licensed or Branch Pilots.*

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**T**HE inhabitants of the Scilly Islands,—much to their credit,—are distinguished in a very eminent manner for their civility to strangers, their behaviour to whom, is alike removed from the coarse rudeness of country boors in England, and the pert and disgusting familiarity too often assumed by the lower orders in towns and cities. The Islanders are also re-

markable for speaking good English,—far preferable, at least, to what is generally heard amongst the humbler classes of any county, at some distance from the metropolis. Their dialect may be denominated a mixture of that of London with a little of the idiom of the West country. This excellence, perhaps, is in a measure owing to their frequent intercourse with shipping from all parts of the Kingdom. Yet there is one peculiarity which I have observed to prevail on all the Islands;—that of dropping the *h* in words beginning with the compound consonants *thr*; thus they call “three,” *tree*; “throat,” *troat*, &c. I at first thought this vitiated pronunciation might be the mere effect of individual negligence, but I found it generally prevailed amongst the common order of people throughout the Islands. They have also this singularity, diametrically opposed to that of the London vulgar,—that whereas the latter sound *oi* like *i*, and call boil, *bile*; point, *pint*, &c. the Scillonians, on the other extreme, pronounce *ie* or *i* like *oi*, and call “pie,” *poy*; “line,” *loin*, &c. I found no other striking peculiarity in their mode of pronunciation, which, in general, is very pleasing to an accurate ear.”

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\* There is, however, a perceptible difference in the dialects of the different Islanders. The inhabitants of St.

Before the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge instituted schools here, the Islanders were said to have been very ignorant. At present there are few, if any, who cannot read and write; and the general accents and emphases of the natives are correct and proper. Being provided with Bibles and Prayer Books, chiefly through the liberality of the above-mentioned Society, their behaviour at Church is decent and exemplary.—To grammatical accuracy they are, of course, strangers.

I do not know one instance of any eminent man having been born in Scilly. Indeed the people of these Islands seem to be wholly unambitious of raising themselves to eminence by any of those ways which have long been marked out as the paths of genius. Content with their islands, their rocks, their seas, and the common productions of the whole, they have no desire to leave the hearths and employments of their forefathers, in pursuit of that airy phantom,—fame.

“ Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learn to stray ;

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Mary’s and St. Martin’s generally speak the best English: Those of Tresco and Bryher have more of a Cornish pronunciation. The natives of St. Agnes are distinguished from those of all the other Islands by a manner of speaking very sensible to the ear, but difficult to define. Yet there are many exceptions to all these observations.

Along the cool, sequestered vale of life  
They keep the noiseless tenor of their way."

The Scillonians pay such attention to the external duties of religion, that in those Islands—( St. Mary's and Tresco )—where dissenters have established themselves, many of the people, " halting between two opinions," repair to the meeting-house in the morning,—to Church in the forenoon and afternoon,—and again to the meeting in the evening !

Whatever evils may be apprehended from such a collision of doctrines and discipline, it may nevertheless be expected that the fruits of morality should be found in those whose attention to the outward services of religion is so remarkable ; and it is but justice to add, that in this respect, the majority of the Scillonians, especially those of the Off-Islands, are very exemplary, although without any assumption of that Pharisaic reserve, and austerity of manners, by which religion and virtue are often disguised and degraded. Swearing, drunkenness, debauchery, and other vices of the grosser kind, are very rarely committed. The exceptions to these remarks have generally occurred at St. Mary's, the population of which, is as great as that of all the other Islands ; and where a promiscuous intercourse with strangers, and a lamentable want of energy in the exercise of parental authority,

(to say nothing of the defective state of the civil power) has tended in some degree to demoralize the character of the lower orders.

It has before been observed that the people of Scilly are very much attached to their native Isles. They are also loyal, in the proper and constitutional sense of the word. The same motives which teach them to "fear God," instruct them also to "honour the King." It is a singular contemplation,—at a time when the Mother Country is almost torn asunder by the conflicting opinions of whigs and tories, radical republicans and privileged pensioners, ultra Catholics and democratic Deists,—that in these Islands,—however rent and disjoined by the convulsions of nature,—a unanimity of sentiment prevails, of attachment to the ecclesiastical and civil pillars of the Constitution, which is the surest pledge of their preservation; and which one could wish to see more extensively influential in the Parent Isle!

By some, the Islanders have been accused of indolence, which, as a universal charge, is a misrepresentation. If they are not, in general, so expeditious in manual operations as their fellow-subjects in England, it is not through any deficiency of mental or bodily qualities; but for want of an observant eye, and a beneficial hand, to direct, stimulate, and reward their exertions. Their alacrity, patience, and

hardihood, in what may be considered their peculiar employment,—that of boarding and assisting vessels in distress,—afford sufficient refutation of a stigma so unfairly brought upon them.

It has also been observed,—and the truth of this remark will soon strike a stranger,—that there is an affected degree of independence amongst the Islanders, which even the pressure of poverty and affliction is unable to subdue. In some instances, this sort of Spanish feeling may certainly have been carried to an excess; but in these times of general corruption of manners, I know not whether it is not at least preferable to that want of shame which lately filled the work-houses of England with so many strong and able-bodied men, who would rather throw themselves on the parish than seek employment at a reduced rate of wages from what they had been accustomed to receive in the time of national prosperity.

Neatness of dress, particularly on the Sabbath Day, is in many instances, carried to an extreme, especially amongst the younger females. It is a ludicrous contrast to see those who have been scrambling over the rocks on the sea-shore, on one day, without shoes or stockings, gathering and drying ore-weed,—dressed in white on the next, with straw hats, flying ribbands, and other articles of female

finery ! Indeed they appear to prefer the employments of *kelping*, knitting, &c. to which they have been accustomed, to the more confined operations of domestic labour : hence most of the servants in the principal houses are procured from England, at much trouble and expence. The men are generally dressed in blue jackets ; and trowsers and their whole appearance is clean, neat, and becoming.

It is not, however, to be imagined, although I have stated the character of the people of Scilly to be so fair in many respects, that I mean to exhibit them without imperfection. On the contrary, my duty, as an impartial writer, obliges me now briefly to state what are the most common faults which prevail amongst the Islanders. On this head, however, I shall be very concise, as these things have already been much magnified by some who may have had an interest in depreciating the character of the people, while scarcely any effort has been made, (till lately) to do them that justice to which they are entitled on the other hand.

A common propensity, too generally diffused, is that of endeavouring to impose upon strangers by exorbitant charges for any little services : and, in more instances than one, I have seen beneficence and kindness repaid by ingratitude and insolence. But alas ! these things



may be seen and felt without taking a voyage to Scilly ! Whatever advantages have been fancied from general education,—gratitude, and humility, certainly, are not of the number.

The amusements of the Islanders being very few,—an almost insatiable curiosity for something novel is a general feature in all ranks. “What news from England ?” is the first and unanimous enquiry of the crowd assembled on the quay, so soon as ever the packet boat comes ashore, and newspapers are circulated with great rapidity amongst all who can procure them. But as these weekly arrivals are utterly insufficient to minister food to a propensity that requires daily and almost hourly indulgence, a system of eaves’ dropping is indulged to a very vexatious extent ;—the sanctity of domestic privacy is violated by talkative and perhaps lying servants, too often encouraged in this breach of trust by those whose duty it is to check every approach to such a system ;—and the minutest incidents of social intercourse are dilated and detailed in every variety that misconception can imagine, or falsehood invent. So strong is this inquisitive propensity, that I have even known an instance of a clergyman being interrupted in the discharge of his duty by the bedside of the sick, through the patient’s indecorous

desire to know the passing incidents of the day !<sup>b</sup>

The Islanders are also of a disposition somewhat satirical, and very fond of affixing ludicrous names both to persons and things, strongly indicative of any peculiarity of shape, size, habit, or disposition. In many instances, a child, almost as soon as it is born, receives the epithet by which it is distinguished for the rest of its life ! Yet it is but just to add that this propensity to nomenclature is in general unaccompanied by malicious feeling. Genuine wit, however, does not appear to be indigenous to these Islands.

The chief employments of the Islanders are, fishing, in all its branches ; piloting vessels in distress, or which might otherwise require assistance ; gathering sea-weed, and preparing kelp for the London and Bristol markets ; and (in the absence of these sources of employment, on what might be almost called their peculiar element) in cultivating their little patches of land, repairing their boats, &c. &c. About one hundred boats, small and large, have generally been employed from the different Islands, in fishing and piloting, most of which boats have been held in shares, being

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<sup>b</sup> See more on this subject in the chapter relating to St. Mary's.

the property of from three to eight men.—A variety of circumstances, however, (which will be fully detailed in the next chapter) lately combined to render all those branches of employment unproductive to the Islanders, and to excite that degree of attention towards them which, it may be hoped, will ultimately tend to the improvement of their condition, and the advantage of the Empire.

Some account of the manner in which those employments are exercised may not be uninteresting to those who are not versed in insular affairs. And first, then, of what is called *kelping*.

Kelp is defined by Dr. Johnson, “a salt produced from calcined sea-weed,” but he does not mention the purposes to which it is applied, although he notices its preparation, in his Tour to the Hebrides. It is used in the manufacture of glass, allum and soap, of the former of which, it constitutes a principal ingredient; and large quantities of it are annually made in the different islands surrounding the United Kingdom. The following is the mode in which it is prepared at Scilly.

During the summer months, great numbers of men, women, boys, and girls, are seen, at low water, cutting the different kinds of *alga*, or ore-weed, from the rocks which are then uncovered by the sea, and bringing it on the beach. As the rocks near the inhabited

Islands do not yield a sufficient quantity for the use of those engaged, some parties take boats and go to the more distant ledges, whence they bring back, at high water, what they may have procured. I have known some to go to what are called the Eastern Islands, (which, on account of their smallness, lowness, and sterility, are uninhabited during the rest of the year) and there erect a hut or two in which they have resided during the whole of the kelping season;—not forgetting, however, (with their characteristic attention to religious duties) to repair to the church of the nearest inhabited Island, on Sundays! The ore-weed is thinly strewed along the beaches of the different Islands in which kelp is prepared, for the purpose of drying it, and rendering it more easily susceptible of the action of fire. Should the skies threaten rain, the weed is laid up in small heaps, like haystacks in England under similar circumstances. The kiln for burning the ore-weed, is a pit scooped out of the sand, of a concave form, being about three feet deep in the centre, and seven feet in diameter. The sides of the pit are lined with stones, in order to prevent the sand from falling into the kelp, and deteriorating its quality. About three or four o'clock in the afternoon, the kiln is usually lighted, which is done by placing a little ignited furze into the bottom of the pit, and gently strewing

some of the driest ore-weed on the flame, which, by having the fuel continually renewed, in a short time becomes and remains a lofty and vivid blaze, surmounted by a column of snow-white smoke; which,—sometimes ascending perpendicularly to the skies,—at others, winding slowly around the dusky Islands, and thence expanding in shadowy vapours over the deep, has a very peculiar effect, which is still further heightened by the number of kilns burning at the same time on the different Islands,—sometimes to the amount of forty or fifty.

But, how much soever the novelty of such a scene may amuse a stranger, he would find a considerable drawback from his gratification resulting from the vapour of the burning weed, the scent of which—(more offensive than that of scorched leather, to which it has some resemblance) impregnates the air for several miles around, and affects it for a considerable time after the fires have ceased. The only consolation to be gained while suffering from this annoyance, is the frequent assurance that “it is not unhealthy;” which, indeed, might easily be supposed, from a consideration of the nature and properties of the ingredients by which it is produced.<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> Although the “kelping season” is generally stated at Scilly to be confined to the Summer months, yet in fact

The lighting and feeding of the kiln is generally performed by women and children, who

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the manufacture is carried on so long as the Islanders can procure any weed to burn. In 1821, in consequence of vast quantities of weed having been cast ashore by a succession of gales, the burning commenced at least two months before the stated period, and kelp continued to be made 'even so late as in the month of September! The smell, as before stated, is peculiarly offensive; and, the smoke being driven in clouds into those houses which lie in the direction of the wind, respiration becomes difficult to the inmates, and the eyes and head are also affected. Wearing apparel, and even the articles of household furniture, retain for a long time a strong smell of the effluvia, which nothing but a vigorous ventilation can remove.

When the smoke is thus driven into the town, the inhabitants, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, are obliged to shut their windows and doors, and to keep their houses as close as possible: But no precautions are sufficient to exclude the insidious visitant; and there is something so revolting in the idea of being compelled to have recourse to such measures, and under such circumstances, as involuntarily recalls to the mind the state of the Smyrneses during the prevalence of the plague!

These "*miseries*," however,—(and certainly they are of a much more serious character than the whole of those developed in the "groanings" of Samuel Sensitive and Timothy Testy! )—might, at least in a great measure, be obviated, by causing the kilns to be made further from the town,—not suffering them to be lighted till five o'clock in the evening,—nor even then when the wind might blow in a direction towards the houses. I have, indeed been told that orders to the above effect, respecting the lighting, have been given by the Duke's Court; but if so, they are

also take an active part in the operations of carrying and drying the weed, &c. In from four to five hours, enough is usually burnt for the day. When, by the intensity of the flame, the mass begins to liquify, the word is given to "*strike the kiln*," which is performed by from ten to fourteen men; who, being each provided with a kind of pitch-fork, divide into two parties, taking their stations on opposite sides of the kiln, and stir the vitrifying mass from side to side with great exertion for about seven minutes; when, (the whole being sufficiently amalgamated) it is left to cool and settle; being fit for exportation immediately after.

A single lump or mass of kelp, formed in a kiln of the dimensions before specified, weighs from two hundred weight and a half, to three hundred.<sup>d</sup> The price of Scilly kelp, for some years past has been about five pounds per ton

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utterly disregarded.—Last year the kilns were frequently kindled so early as *one* o'clock, and kept burning for the rest of the day!

<sup>d</sup> It is estimated, in Dr. Macculloch's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, that the quantity of sea-weed required to make a ton of kelp, is twenty four tons; "hence," as he observes, "a conception of the labour employed in this manufacture may be formed, since the whole must be cut, carried, spread out, dried, and stacked, before it is ready for burning."

to the merchants of London, Bristol, &c. but each of these tons is twenty-one hundred weight, and the poor islanders complain that the price which they receive from some of the merchants on the place, though nominally three pounds, is, in reality far short of that sum; as, instead of being paid in money, they are necessitated to take up the whole, or at least the greater part, of their portions of the produce of their different kilns, in grocery and other goods; which certainly is directly contrary to the spirit of some late Acts of Parliament, and requires examination by the real friends of the people. The Islanders seldom get more, in a family, than from £7 to £10, for their labours during the kelping season. In 1821, however, from the peculiarly favourable circumstances attending this manufacture, and the improvement of the prices, (which in some instances were as high as £4. 10s. per ton) several individuals realized £14 or £15 by their exertions in this laborious employment.

Kelp-making was first introduced into these Islands in the year 1684, by a Mr. Nance of Cornwall, who has still some descendants residing on St. Martin's. It is much to be regretted that, for want of proper encouragement, the produce of these islands in this useful branch of manufacture, has hitherto been



far short in quality and price, to that of the Western Islands of Scotland, the kelp of which, during the late war, was sold for even fifteen pounds per ton, the manufacture having there attained all the improvements of which it was susceptible. More judgment and exactness than can be expected in those manually engaged in making kelp, are necessary in several parts of the process, particularly in distinguishing the period of vitrification, when the act of "striking," or stirring, becomes necessary. The appointment of proper persons to regulate these and other matters connected with this subject, would be a great advantage to the islanders.\*

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\* As the weed, after having been gathered, is spread on the beach to dry in the sun for several days, it is probable that much of the saline matter which constitutes its excellence is absorbed, as well by the dews of night as by the heat of day. In addition to which inconvenience, it is also evident that much sand must thus be gathered, by which the quality of the kelp is deteriorated: It might therefore be desirable to try the effect of drying the weed on a paved floor, under cover, and of burning it in iron pans. Perhaps some improvements might result from experiments on the different *kinds* of oar-weed, instead of burning them promiscuously in one kiln, as is now practised in making kelp.

Since the above was written, and even so lately as the commencement of the present year (1822) I understand that some persons have taken a house at Tresco, and com-

*Piloting* has been mentioned as another source of employment to the people of Scilly. But they sustain many oppressive and vexatious inconveniences in the exercise of this needful calling, which will be specified at the close of this article.

To the kelping-season, before mentioned, succeed the labours of the harvest, and other points of agricultural economy peculiar to the fall of the year. The gales of the Autumnal equinox,—(the harbingers of those by which Scilly is pretty briskly and frequently visited till the return of the vernal season)—make the falling in with these Islands, &c. an object of great importance to masters of ships proceeding up either channel; and few, who are prudent, will choose either, to come amongst them, or pass near them, without a pilot. As, by some, Scilly is shunned, especially during the prevalence of boisterous weather, as a place fraught with imminent dangers; so, to others, especially to the masters of coasting vessels, it is justly considered a desirable

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menaced the erection of suitable buildings, for the purpose of making *kelp all the year round*, on an improved process;—the principal feature of which is, that the sea-weed will be burnt as soon as it is sufficiently dry to receive the fire. This plan is proposed to be adopted on all the Islands, and it is thought it will be found highly advantageous to the persons employed.

place of refuge, particularly when the wind is in an Easterly direction, as it unites the advantage of present safety with that of facility of egress when the wind shifts to any other point of the compass. So enterprizing are the Islanders, that on the first view of an approaching vessel, especially in very violent weather, boats will put off from different Islands at the same time, the crews vieing with each other which shall first get alongside and offer assistance. When a fleet or other great number of ships is seen off the Islands, the natives make use of a very expeditious method of tendering their services to as many as possible. They launch from the shore, regardless of the weather, and crowded together in any manner, in some of their small open boats; then, rowing for the vessel highest at hand, they get alongside as well as circumstances will permit;—leave a pilot in her, and proceed to the next; continuing to diminish their numbers in this manner, until only two men are left in the boat, who then row for the shore, and subsequently share with the others on a division of the gross amount of their exertions.

In affording relief to vessels in imminent danger, the enterprize, skill, and fortitude of the inhabitants of the Scilly Islands have frequently been shewn in a manner which may

have been equalled in some, but certainly not surpassed in *any*, part of the world. Numerous have been the instances in which, when vessels have been considered wholly hopeless by their crews, and all possibility of their preservation seemed taken away;—some of these intrepid men have advanced, at the peril of their lives, through every wave;—succeeded in reaching the objects of distress;—relieved the exhausted crews at the pumps, or wheresoever else might be necessary; refitted what was wanting, as well as the emergency would admit;—and succeeded in navigating the vessels safely, amidst winds, and rocks, and opposing tides, either to a commodious anchorage within the range of their own Islands, or to some convenient port in England.—To expatiate here on the advantages resulting to a Commercial Empire from a set of men so situated, so trained, and so inclined (after what has already been advanced on subjects analagous) would surely be superfluous.

The two principal grounds of complaint alledged (not only by the islanders, but by every observant and impartial resident) to exist in this employment, must now be shewn. I shall begin with that which is oldest, and which indeed from its great age, it might have been hoped, was no longer in existence.

It was observed by Heath, and subsequently stated by Troutbeck, that "the Islanders expose their lives to great hazard in venturing off, in their small boats, at sea, to save the lives of their fellow-subjects and others, by assisting ships in distress. Sometimes," says the former "they save the people, together with the ship and cargo; sometimes the people only; and sometimes part of the cargo, when the people and vessel are lost. But they are sometimes ungratefully rewarded by the merchants for their salvage, who, of late, finding a pretence for taxing some with injustice, paid the whole number short of their agreement." He very judiciously observes, in another place, that "ships being sometimes lost on the coast of Scilly, by the neglect or misconduct of the seamen, especially in bad weather, the merchants and some others, not always made acquainted with the true cause of these misfortunes, have an ill-grounded opinion of the situation of these Islands, as well as a blind prejudice to the disadvantage of the inhabitants; not distinguishing that ships are as liable to be lost on many other parts of the English coast, if due care is not taken by the skilful mariner."

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' Heath's Account, p. 138; or, See the same in Troutbeck's Survey, p. 170.

That the Islanders, in exposing themselves for the purpose of assisting vessels in distress, &c. not only incur frequent and great hardships and perils, must be evident to all who are anywise acquainted with maritime affairs. But this is not all:— So frequent are the catastrophes occasioned by their hazardous calling as to have given rise in Scilly to the saying before quoted,\* “that for one man who dies here a natural death, nine are drowned.” The *truth* of this expression, unhappily, can be but too well established by nine tenths of the families in the Islands. Orphans, childless parents, widowed mothers, brotherless females, and others, in whose breasts, almost “all the charities” of consanguinity have been snapped by the terrible disasters of the sea, here meet the eye at almost every turn; and the simple narrative of some of the circumstances which have been productive of so much devastation, might call forth a tear in eyes not commonly wont to be in “the melting mood.”

When the nature of the services rendered by the islanders to vessels in distress, is considered;—when the immense risks which they frequently incur, in pursuit of their object, are also taken into the account; every man

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\* Ch. iii. p. 82.

possessing the common feelings of justice which may be supposed characteristic of humanity, would surely agree that as ample a remuneration as would be consistent with the principles of equity, should be made to those intrepid men. But who is to decide what amount should be called ample, without being exorbitant; or who shall regulate precisely a table of salvors' fees with due consideration to every circumstance that might operate, in strict justice, to their increase or diminution? Such a thing is utterly hopeless, and hence the mistakes that frequently arise between owners, captains, and salvors, in settling disputes of this nature. It would be highly desirable, therefore, if at Scilly,—( which has before been shewn to be under an Admiralty jurisdiction )—and at some other places on the English coast, a Board or Committee of naval gentlemen were instituted, for the summary settlement of such disputes, such Boards having certain official regulations to guide them in their decisions, but with considerable latitude of judgment allowed as to what share of the value of vessel and cargo belonged to the salvors, which, in such cases as those before instanced, should never be less than one-fourth.

Another hardship grievously felt by many able and industrious men on these Islands, is the system of appointing what are termed

*branch*-pilots.<sup>b</sup> On the Scilly Islands there are thirty-two persons bearing this denomination, of whom no less than *twenty-four* reside on the single Island of St. Mary's! These branch pilots have a right to board and take charge of any vessel, even after she may have been brought into the roads by any of the other Islanders, whom they dismiss without allowing them a shilling for their exertions! This is a crying injustice to the Off-islanders, especially as they alledge that many of the branch pilots (so called) resident at St. Mary's, are persons who have not been generally accustomed to the sea. Certainly it is but fair and reasonable that this complaint should be immediately obviated; and that every inhabitant of the different Islands who had been usually engaged on the sea in fishing, &c. for a certain number of years, should afterwards be enabled, as often as opportunity presented, to receive the reward due to his perseverance and address. The present system is evidently calculated to weaken the energies of the great majority of the Islanders, and to prove detrimental to the interests of the country as well as to the causes of justice, and humanity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>b</sup> See more of this in the following chapter.

<sup>1</sup> The evil here noticed might be most advantageously obviated, either by abolishing the system of branch pilot-



Of the other grievances under which the Islanders have laboured;—of the means that have been adopted to afford them relief; and of the results by which those means have been distinguished; a particular account will be found in the following Chapter.

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age altogether, and leaving the employment open to all persons duly qualified to take charge of a vessel; or by extending the number of licences, according to the population of the different Islands and the circumstances of their inhabitants.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Extensive Distress lately felt in the Off-Islands of Scilly.—A Deputation from Penzance visits the Islands.—Abstract of their Report, with Remarks.—The late Distress the unavoidable Result of distant Causes.—An Enumeration of those Causes.—Sympathy excited in England, and Means adopted for the Relief of the Islanders.—Instances of almost unparalleled misery in some of the Off-Islands. (note.)—A Fishery begun, for the purpose of affording permanent Relief.—Cellar erected at Tresco, and why.—Success of this Undertaking.—A still further Extension of the Fishery desirable.—Advantages of encouraging the British Fisheries on the broadest Scale.—Extensive and judicious Plan recommended by Mr. Phelps (note.)—Summary of the Benefits already conferred on the Scilly Islanders by the late benevolent exertions in their behalf.—Their Gratitude and Perseverance noticed.—Manner and Seasons of their Employment.—Exposition of the Measures necessary to insure permanent Benefit to the Islanders.—Advantages that would result from the adoption of those*

*measures, and evils of neglecting them.—*  
*Notices relative to Fisheries in general.—*  
*Conclusion.*

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**ABOUT** three years since, the attention of the public was forcibly excited by various printed statements, displaying the general distress of the Scilly Islanders in very affecting colours. In order to ascertain the reality and extent of the alledged misery, Sir Rose Price, Baronet, of Trengwainton, Cornwall,—( whose individual benevolence is only equalled by his public integrity as a Magistrate )—accompanied by the Rev. Messrs Veale and Tonkin, of Penzance, with Mr. Samuel John, of the same place, as Secretary to the Deputation, proceeded (at the solicitation of the Bench of Magistrates acting for the West Division of the Hundred of Penwith) to St. Mary's, Scilly where they arrived on the 6th of September, 1818; and, having first obtained whatsoever information was thought necessary from the local authorities of that Island, the Deputation next proceeded to the Off-Islands, where, having convened meetings of the heads of families, and made such enquiries as appeared best calculated to elicit the objects in view; the Deputation returned to Cornwall and lost no time in preparing the Report of which the following is an abstract :

“ The Deputation found no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that very great, and, indeed, extreme distress and privation had been endured by the inhabitants of the Off-Islands during the preceding winter, and the early part of the then current year; and that, except in some few instances, the reports which had reached them with relation to those distresses, were substantially correct. It appeared to the Deputation, however, that the distresses of the Islanders, severe as they had been, were suspended for the time by the employment of making and burning kelp;<sup>a</sup> by the lobster-fishery, which had been unusually productive during that season;<sup>b</sup> and more particularly by a donation of £ 500, which, on the application of the resident authorities of the Islands, had been humanely given by His Majesty’s Government towards the relief of the suffering Islanders; the greater part of which had been judiciously distributed, under the direction of Mr. Johns and the Duke of Leeds’s Council on the Islands, in small sums of money, or in clothing, or otherwise relieving the immediate and urgent wants of the Islanders.”

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<sup>a</sup> Compare pp. 118 & 119 of the preceding chapter.

<sup>b</sup> See some observations on this branch of employment in a subsequent section of the present chapter.

The Deputation ascribed the immediate causes of the recent distresses of the Islanders,—1. To the bad harvests of the two preceding years, and the general insufficiency of the corn-crops to supply the Islanders with bread;—2. To the failure, during the preceding year, of the means of making kelp;—3. To the decrease of employment in pilotage, resulting from the establishment of branch-pilots, by which that employment was monopolized by very few hands;—4. To the failure, in a considerable degree, of the ling-fishery; 5. and especially, To the entire suppression of smuggling in these Islands by the Preventive-boat system; by the loss of which contraband trade, the Islanders were deprived of their chief means of support.<sup>a</sup>

Having thus stated the causes as well as the nature of the distress, the Report proceeded to shew that, in order to prevent the recurrence of such misery, and to afford the Islanders future and permanent support, the establishment of the mackerel and pilchard fisheries in these Islands, *and that means only*, could be available. Estimates were annexed, of the

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<sup>a</sup> See an exposition of this injustice in the preceding chapter, page 127.

<sup>d</sup> See some observations on this subject in a subsequent part of the present chapter.

expenditure of boats, nets, cellars, &c. and it was resolved that an appeal should be made to the benevolence of the British public in behalf of so large, and nationally important, a body, as the inhabitants of the Off-Islands, who were stated in the Report to be nearly twelve hundred in number, and whose services as pilots for the two channels, as well as for their own harbours, can scarcely be too strongly insisted on.

On the foregoing Report, a few observations here may not be unacceptable.—I shall confine myself to those alledged causes of distress on which I have not yet particularly animadverted.

First, that the Preventive system could have materially contributed to the distress of the Islanders, though generally believed, does not seem borne out by facts. Of the nature and expenditure of that system, and whether it could be so modified as to be rendered more palatable to the people without injuring the Revenue, I shall not here express my opinions. In justice, however, to the cause of truth and order, it should be observed that an illicit trade in exciseable articles, especially spirituous liquors, has ever been found as pernicious to the morals, habits, and health, of individuals, as prejudicial to the fair dealer and injurious to the Government. It is true that many

of the Islanders formerly derived great advantage from the pilotage of ships in the Channel, especially of homeward-bound Indiamen, to which they carried out potatoes and other vegetables, poultry, fish, &c.; receiving (in exchange for their labour and the produce of the Islands) rum, sugar, coffee, tobacco, &c. and these articles they partly appropriated to their own use, and partly disposed of, for money or clothes, chiefly on St. Mary's. Of the general prevalence of intemperance resulting from the low rate at which ardent spirits were formerly procured, both Heath and Troutbeck bear witness; and many of the Islanders express their conviction of their improved state in consequence of the restrictions placed in the way of that temptation to excess. That individual inconveniences, of a nature too trivial to require the interposition of the agents of Government, may have occurred in consequence of the severe measures lately adopted to prevent smuggling, is, I fear, but too true: On the other hand it should be stated, that even when that species of commerce was carried on to its greatest extent in these Islands, the profits were confined to the hands of a few of the principal inhabitants of St. Mary's and one or two of the Off-Islands; the poor crews who were employed to run the goods, being in such a state of penury, that

but few of them were even able to procure a fishing line!

The foundation of the recent distress of the Islanders had taken root many years before the Preventive system was thought of, and was the necessary result of the peculiar circumstances under which the people had long been placed.—In a manner, unknown to the Legislature and to the English nation;—with a population that had nearly doubled within twenty years, and was, and is, still on the increase;—with limited opportunities of employment, and often prevented from having recourse even to these, either by the effects of injudicious restrictions, or by the want of money and materials to enable them to break up ground, repair their boats, or pursue the avocations suitable to the season of winter;—with no poor-rates to afford relief under general pressure, nor charitable funds for the alleviation of individual affliction, however severe:—Lastly, but not of least importance in this long list of *desiderata*,—Without the presence of an active, benevolent, and judicious resident on each of their different Islands, who might stimulate their exertions, support their cause, and signalize himself under every circumstance, as “the poor man’s friend;”—surely, when it is considered that the Scilly Islanders were so long destitute of advantages



and facilities so numerous and so important, the only wonder will be, not that the distress was so great and prevalent, but that it had not earlier appeared, and been attended with more fatal effects.

In consequence of the appearance of the Report of the Deputation from Penzance, by which it was manifest that private charity would be wholly insufficient for the supply of even the then present exigencies of the Islanders; a general subscription throughout the Kingdom was resorted to, as the only means likely to afford permanent relief, and to prevent a recurrence of the evils. The cities of London and Bristol were particularly distinguished on this occasion; many of the Nobility and Gentry in these and other places subscribing liberally towards the general fund; others distinguishing their munificence by sending large quantities of cloaths and different necessaries for the immediate relief of the sufferers, especially medicines, groceries, child-bed linen, &c. To the honour of British generosity be it recorded that, at a time of great national difficulty, embarrassment, and consternation, a sum amounting to near Nine Thousand Pounds was collected for these beneficent purposes. The venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which has ever manifested a particular regard for

the Islanders, displayed its accustomed liberality and benevolence on this occasion by a noble donation; and, through the exertions of the Committee established at Penzance in consequence of the Report before noticed, no less a sum than £1800 was raised before the state of the Islands was publicly noticed in the Metropolis.

For the appropriation of the funds so raised for the benefit of the poor Off-Islanders, a Committee of Noblemen and Gentlemen was formed in London, in the month of March, 1819, and another was appointed at Penzance.\* The London Committee lost no time in endeavouring to set their benevolent task

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\*The London Committee consisted of the following Members: The Earl of Rocksavage, Viscount Exmouth, Viscount Bernard, Lord De Dunstanville, Lord Gambier, Hon. F. Calthorpe, M. P., Hon. G. Vernon, Hon. E. Harbord, (now Lord Suffield,) Sir W. Lemon, Bart. M. P., Sir C. Hawkins, Bart. M. P., Admiral Sir C. M. Pole, Bart. M. P., Sir John Sewell, Rear Admirals Douglas and Spranger, W. T. Money, Esq. M. P., J. N. Fazakerly, Esq. M. P., Captains Grant, Hawker, Scobell, and Lennox, R. N., J. Weyland, Jun., Luke Howard, Richard Phillips, J. Mortlock, C. Grant, W. Stewart, and John Griffin, Esqrs.—Wm. Williams, Esq. M. P. and Lieut. J. E. Gordon, R. N. Secretaries. The Penzance Committee was composed of the Mayor and Justice of that town for the time being, Rev. C. V. Le Grice, Capt. Scobell, R. N. and H. P. Tremenheere, Esq.

on foot, and they accordingly appointed Lieutenant Edwin Thrackston, of the Royal Navy, as their Agent and Representative on these Islands; whither he arrived in the month of May in the same year.

Mr. Thrackston's first object, on entering on the duties of his important office, was to visit the cottages of the different Off-Islands in person; by which means he had an opportunity of arriving, with certainty, at conclusions which could be obtained in no other manner. Having ascertained the population and wants of the different Islands, and administered such present relief as the funds entrusted to his care permitted him to afford;—having also satisfied himself as to the industrious principles of the Islanders, and their earnest desire of employment; he turned his attention to the more important (because more permanent) concerns of the Fishery.<sup>f</sup> Boats,

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<sup>f</sup> As a proof of the severe state of distress to which the people were reduced, it may be mentioned, that in some huts were found six or nine individuals crowded together indiscriminately on a most wretched substitute for a bed; having no other furniture than a large stone, with a sod on it, for a seat, and a couple of planks serving for a table! But this is not all; nay, it is, comparatively, but trifling to the distress which had existed but a short time before, when misery and starvation prevailed to a degree that would shock the most unfeeling heart to witness. So great

nets, and every other necessary article being provided, the pilchard and mackerel fisheries were happily commenced on the 12th of August in the same year (being the birth-day of His Most Gracious Majesty, George the Fourth.) From the judicious plan on which this establishment has been formed, and the results which have already ensued, there can be no reasonable doubt that, if properly assisted by Government, it will prove highly beneficial to the Kingdom at large, as well as to the deserving natives of these hitherto-neglected Islands.

Previous to the sending out of the boats, it was necessary that a cellar should be erected in some central spot, for the purposes of storing and curing the fish. A variety of circumstances all of which will be found of considerable weight, determined Mr. Thrackston

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was the distress in many families that they were obliged through absolute necessity, to devour the small quantity of seed which they had reserved to raise the crops (both of potatoes and barley) of the ensuing year. Many were constrained to beg a passage to Cornwall in order that they might there try the precarious chance of eleemosynary aid; and the deplorable appearance of those who presented themselves at St. Mary's to claim a share in the corn and other articles distributed from the fund given for that purpose by Government (£ 500) was at once sufficient to harrow up and melt the soul.

to give the preference to Tresco instead of St. Mary's, which had been strongly recommended for that purpose by some of its inhabitants who were interested in that object. Had the building been on the latter island, the poor fishermen of St. Martin's, Tresco, and Bryher, must have passed their own homes after having been out all night, exhausted with labour, cold, and hunger; and they would have been wholly deprived of the advantage which they now enjoy, of having their wives and families to assist in carrying their fish ashore, and having their several shares regularly entered at the cellar. The proximity of the Abbey Pond (a fine piece of fresh water, covering a surface of about sixteen acres) was an advantage too great to be overlooked in determining the site of the building, which has the additional advantage of being immediately contiguous to an extensive tract of waste ground, highly convenient for drying the nets, and for other purposes connected with the establishment. Tresco has also the advantage of a safe harbour on either side of the Island, by which means, the approach to the cellar, from the other Islands, is greatly shortened, and otherwise rendered convenient.

The cellar is in form of a hollow square, and of the following dimensions:

Length ..... 47 feet.  
 Breadth ..... 45 ..  
 Height of walls ..... 14 ..

The whole is constructed on the most improved principles, and the cellar is provided with every convenience for washing, storing, and salting the fish; preserving the deliquescent oil, &c. Over this are the Agent's office, the store-room, and various lofts for laying up and repairing the nets. Behind the cellar is a furnace for *barking* the nets, previous to the commencement of the fishery;—an operation by which they are preserved from the destructive qualities of salt-water. Over the principal entrance is a tablet with the following inscription:

“ A. D. 1819.

“ ERECTED BY THE COMMITTEE

“ FOR THE RELIEF OF THE OFF ISLANDS.”

The whole is a plain but substantial monument of British generosity to the poor, but industrious, inhabitants of the Off Islands.

It must be a source of sincere gratification to the humane world in general, and to the benevolent Contributors for the relief of these Islands in particular, to know that every reasonable prospect of success appears to favour this undertaking. In 1819, owing to the un-

avoidable lateness of the season at which the boats were sent out, not more than 97 hogsheads of pilchards were caught by the eight boats employed; being an average of little more than twelve hogsheads to each boat: But in the following season (1820) the quantity stored was 140 hogsheads, which, at £5 per hogshead, (for which they were sold) made a return of £700. Besides this cheering statement,—the great number of large fish which the Islanders are now enabled to catch and cure, either for sale or for their own consumption, should by no means be left out of consideration in estimating the aggregate benefit resulting to these poor people from the late exertions in their favour.

What has hitherto been done, however, can but be considered as the incipient measures of an undertaking, which, if duly and spiritedly pursued, (by giving suitable encouragement to the exercise of the skill and industry of the Islanders, and thus enabling them to avail themselves of the resources which Providence has placed before them) cannot fail to be attended with immense advantage to the country at large. But this can only be effected by enlarging the fishery at Scilly, and establishing it on that extended scale in which it may be proved capable of acting. After all that has been written, especially of late years, and

during the prevalence of a recent season of unexampled national distress, on the importance of this branch of employment, it cannot be expected that much remains to be added; yet it may be observed,—with reference to the subject immediately under consideration,—that hitherto the fishermen of Scilly have seldom been able to proceed further than four or five leagues from the land, in pursuit of the cod and ling fishery, through the want of proper boats; whereas, from the peculiar situation and conveniences of these Islands, the catching of such fish might be carried on by the natives, under suitable encouragement, almost to any extent. Boats or busses can proceed for the Channel from Scilly, with the wind from West-South-West to South; while, under the same circumstances, those in any part even of Mount's Bay would be wind-bound. It is lamentable to observe that, by the present regulations of Government respecting the fisheries, the Dutch fishermen are protected at the expence of our own. It is suggested, therefore, that such an impost should be laid on Dutch monopoly in this respect, as should be tantamount to an interdiction of the claim of fishing on our banks. By this means, our own markets in every part of the Kingdom would be better supplied, and at a cheaper rate, while



the profits of an immense exportation would be wholly our own; in addition to which, we should here find the immediate and permanent advantages of furnishing employment and support to the poor, and rearing a numerous race of skilful pilots and hardy sailors, alike useful to the naval and commercial interests of the country.\*

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\* On the general advantages which would accrue to the nation from the encouragement of its industry and commerce so far as relate to these branches, I beg to refer the patriotic reader to Phelps's "*Treatise on the Importance of Extending the British Fisheries*,"—a work fraught with sound arguments and incontrovertible facts, and well deserving the attention of the Legislature and of the country at large. The inexhaustible supply of fish on the coasts and in the bays of Iceland, induces the judicious author to recommend the connecting of the Iceland Fisheries with corresponding establishments on the Scotch, Irish, and British coasts. He suggests the advantages that would result from appointing different fishing stations, or *depôts*, "one at the Orkneys, one at the Scilly Islands, one on the N. W. coast of Ireland, one at the Isle of Man, and at any other places that may be deemed eligible; by which, vessels from Iceland will always find a favourable wind to one of these stations; and at some seasons of the year, they may be most profitably employed in fishing contiguous to those stations." The author shews the advantage of prosecuting the Nymph Bank Fishery, which, connected with that at the Scilly Islands, would give employment and subsistence to the poor of Scilly, Cornwall, and the South part of Ire-

Mr. Thrackston also proposes to extend his attention, as soon as circumstances shall permit, to the *lobster fishery*, which is capable of being carried on in a manner tending considerably to the advantage of these Islands as well as to the convenience of the inhabitants of the neighbouring counties.

The following appears to be the result of the exertions already made by the Honourable General Committee, for affording permanent relief to the Inhabitants of the Off-Islands of Scilly :

Cost of the erection of the Fish Cellar .....	£800	0	0
Applied for purchasing 2 Boats, of 14 tons each, adapted for the Mackerel and Pilchard Fisheries: (each Boat being three years' old) .....	}	200	0 0

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land.\* His observations on the impolitic salt duties, and on the advantages of fisheries in general, are refragable; and cannot fail to be highly extolled by all who are competent to form a judgment, or capable of being swayed by demonstrations. Most heartily is it to be wished, that a work so replete with valuable information, may soon experience that attention from Government, to which it is every way entitled. (See also the Report, and Address, of the Committee of the Downs Society of Fishermens' Friends.)

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\* The Nymph Bank lies off the Southern coast of Ireland, and abounds with large cod, ling, hake, and whiting-pellock. The Bank lies nearly E. N. E. and W. S. W. and is in length about 47 leagues, extending away towards the Bay of Biscay. Its distance from Scilly Light is 30 leagues W. N. W.

Brought over.....	£1000	0	0
Repairing 6 Boats belonging to the Islanders (of from 14 to 16 tons each) and adapting them for the Mackerel and Pilchard Fisheries; providing them with masts, sails, &c. (at an average of £70 for each Boat).....	420	0	0
Purchasing 163 mackerel nets, tackling, &c. (each net at a cost of about £4 10 0) }	733	10	0
Purchasing 95 pilchard nets, tackling, &c. (each net at about £9).....	855	0	0
Total.....	£3,068	10	0

Besides the advantages clearly derivable from the above measures, great and immediate benefit was found by those of the Islanders whose distress was the most urgent, by a previous distribution of a considerable number of small boats (which were much wanted, those on the Islands being old and unfit for service;)—by furnishing the people with *trammels*, mullet-nets, fishing-lines, leads, &c.;—by supplying them with barley and potatoes, for food and cultivation;—and ( “ though last, not least ” in the consideration of the philanthropist ) by the distribution of a great quantity of clothing, medicines, &c. to the most necessitous; the cost of the whole amounting to a very considerable sum.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> A very liberal donation of comfortable cloathing for men and women, was sent hither by some Ladies of Bath,

The boats are navigated by seven or eight hands each. Those boats which belong to the Islanders, and which were repaired, for the purpose of the fishery, from the funds before mentioned, bring one-third of their pilchards and mackerel to the cellar, as the property of the Committee, and as an equivalent for the use of the nets. The larger fish, taken by hook and line, are the *conditional* property of the crews by whom they are caught.

It is gratifying to mention that, although, from the want of previous superintendence, some difficulties were experienced, on the

Bristol, the Isle of Wight, &c. which was suitably distributed. When it is considered that,—such was the severity of the late distress, that many of the poor Islanders and their families were almost reduced to a state of nudity, with the additional misfortune of having neither bed nor bedding;—the value of such a gift may be justly appreciated: The charitable donors, it is fervently hoped, will receive their reward in a better world!

It should also be mentioned, that the Honourable General Committee pay a Surgeon £60 per annum, and supply him with medicines, for the use of the Off-Islanders.—A most important benefit! as heretofore there was only one medical resident at Scilly,—the Staff-Surgeon, at St. Mary's; whose local situation was too remote to afford the possibility of prompt assistance being rendered in those cases in which, by timely care only, the fatal effects of casualty may be prevented; and valuable lives be preserved to society.

commencement of the fishery, in bringing those of the Islanders who were employed, into a system of regularity; yet their persevering conduct, when engaged, merits the warmest eulogiums. They have, sometimes, when the prospects have been favourable, kept to sea for five or six successive days and nights, scanty as their means of enjoyment or accommodation must necessarily have been.—Conduct like this requires no comment, yet well deserves to be recorded. The fishermen's wives, also, on the arrival of the boats at Tresco, shew the greatest alacrity in attending to carry the fish to the Cellar, and curing them there.

To the humanity of the British public, then, (under Providence) are most of the inhabitants of the Off-Islands of Scilly indebted for being rescued from their late extreme state of wretchedness, and for being placed in a condition to earn their bread, and maintain their families, by their own exertions. Much, indeed, are they beholden to the characteristic philanthropy of those of their fellow-subjects who were doubly blessed by Heaven,—with the *means* and *inclination* of doing good; yet much remains to be done before the full harvest of advantage, contemplated by their benevolent supporters, can be effectually reaped. In order to give full effect to the important

intentions of the Committee, and to employ those persons who are still destitute,—and whose number, on the Off-Islands, amounts to upwards of one hundred (the majority of whom have large families, for the most part consisting of from eight to eleven members)—it is desirable that not less than thirteen other boats, of twenty tons each, should be engaged; which, considering the additional expence of their materials and tackling, together with the great improvements that have been made in the present establishment, and the necessity of providing a suitable house on Tresco, for the resident agent or manager of the fisheries, would require a further sum of near ten thousand pounds; which, it is earnestly to be hoped, if it cannot be obtained by subscription, will readily be furnished as a loan by a paternal Government, on proper security being given, by sufficient trustees, for the payment of the interest, regularly; as well as for the restoration, from time to time, of such parts of the principal, as the success of the different seasons should enable them to offer.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, the Author has had great pleasure in finding that a disposition to assist the Islanders to the amount proposed, has been manifested by His Majesty's Ministers. The following account of the manner in which it is intended to appropriate this farther grant, may be generally interesting:

When the proposed extension of the fishery shall be carried into effect, it would also be desirable that every species of industry connected with it should be taught and practised on the Islands. This regulation would, of itself, be a considerable source of employment to men, women, and children, especially during the winter-season; and would be highly beneficial to the general interests of the concern. A manufactory for twine and cordage might be established on each of the four principal Off-Islands, where nets could be made and repaired,—sails mended,—and other necessary employments pursued. The different repairs of the *boats*, &c. might be most advantageously effected at St. Mary's, under suitable conditions.

Having now shewn the beneficial effects of

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For the purchase of 13 large Boats, including } their materials of all kinds .....	£ 7345
Erecting a Bulking House, &c.....	700
For a House and Offices for the Agent.....	500
Expences of a Furnace, for barking the nets .....	80
Incidentals.....	100
	<hr/>
	£ 8725
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The *returns* (including the interest of the money advanced) even calculated on the comparatively unsuccessful fishery of the year 1820, have been estimated at £1110. 17s. 11d.

what has already been done by establishing a fishery (although on a comparatively small scale) at Scilly; and having demonstrated the advantages of carrying this undertaking to a much greater extent; I shall only remark, in conclusion, that serious inconvenience, and much distress, will inevitably ensue, unless some measures, of the nature here recommended, be speedily adopted. Many of the Islanders are still unemployed, through the inadequacy of the fund lately raised (liberal as it was) to administer to the necessities of all. The persons who at present are, or may hereafter be, engaged, will constantly need the presence of an active and intelligent superintendant, to stimulate their exertions and reward their skill. Policy, justice, and humanity equally urge the establishment of the measures proposed, as beneficial alike to the Islands of Scilly and the interests of the mother country.

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To those Readers who are unacquainted with the general details relative to Fisheries, the following additional notices may not be unwelcome.

Mackerel and pilchards are the only fish caught in *drift nets*. The mackerel fishery



commences about the middle of March, and lasts till July, when the pilchard fishery begins, which continues till the latter part of October, although it generally experiences some interruption from the prevalence of stormy weather during the autumnal equinox. Mackerel are, for the most part, sold fresh, when a ready market can be found; otherwise, they are pickled in casks, of from 25 to 50 gallons. During the fishing season, many boats generally arrive at Scilly from Southampton, Bristol, and other ports, in both Channels, and take considerable quantities of this fine fish from the natives.—Pilchards, after having been salted and pressed, are exported in hogsheads to the Mediterranean, where they are, and have long been, in great request.<sup>k</sup>

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<sup>k</sup> The *pilchard* and *herring*,—the former of which is an object of such great importance to the fishermen on the coasts of Cornwall, as the latter is to those of Scotland,—bear so great a resemblance to each other in size and form, that persons unacquainted with piscatory varieties might easily suppose them to be of the same species. Their distinctive characteristics are as follow: The pilchard is smaller and rounder than the herring;—its scales adhere closely, whereas those of the herring drop off easily; and its dorsal fin is placed exactly in the centre of gravity, so that, if the fish be suspended by this fin, it preserves an even balance, whilst the herring, by the same trial, is found to dip towards the head.—All the theories hitherto published respecting the migration of these fish,

The larger fish found round Scilly, (and which are enumerated in a former part of this work<sup>1</sup>) are caught with hook and line, during the Summer months. Hake, however, are frequently caught in the driving-nets, whither their voracity induces them to pursue the pilchards. Many of these fish, as well as those of a smaller species, are salted in, by the Islanders, for their own consumption during winter.

*Drift* or *driving nets*, which have been frequently mentioned in the foregoing article, are of various lengths, from 30 to 45 fathoms,<sup>a</sup> and about 4 fathoms in depth: They derive their name from being allowed to drift with the tide from the boats whence they have been *shot*, or cast; the top of the nets being kept floating by large pieces of cork, fastened at intervals of about one foot. The fish are caught by being entangled in the meshes, against which they are borne by the ebbing or flowing of the tide. The evenings and mornings are the best periods for catching

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are contradicted by facts and experience. The times of their appearance, and the places of their resort, are subject to changes for which no satisfactory account has yet been offered.

<sup>1</sup> See chap. iii. part I.

<sup>a</sup> In some of the fishing-bays in Cornwall they are from 100 to 1000 fathoms long.

most kinds of fish, but congers are caught in dark nights.

Pilchards are said to be *bulked*, when they are piled up in layers, on the pavement of the cellars. This operation is performed by women, and with so much exactness, that the head of every fish, in the front row of a bulk containing from ten to one hundred and twenty hogsheads, may be distinctly seen. Between each layer of fish so piled, a quantity of salt is carefully sprinkled. The fish remain in bulk for thirty six days, during which time the oil, pickle, &c. are drained off through gutters formed for the purpose, and received into a kind of well, or small reservoir. The fish are then washed in large troughs, and regularly piled in hogsheads, the heads being outermost; and they are there pressed as closely as possible, by large levers,\* for the purpose of forcing out the oil still remaining in the fish, which runs through a small aperture at the bottom of the cask. The number of pilchards in each hogshead depends, of course, on the size of the fish, and may vary from 2,700 to 3,000; and for curing this quantity 300lbs of salt is necessary. The quantity of oil yielded by one hogshead of fish, is about

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\* Screws are mostly used in Cornwall for this end.

three gallons and a half; or one hogshead of oil from eighteen hogsheads of pilchards.

After the fish have remained under the press for the space of eight days, the casks are headed up for exportation. A bounty of eight shillings and sixpence is allowed by Government on every hogshead exported.

It is, however, much to be regretted, that while Government, by the bounty before mentioned, shews such a friendly aspect to the fisheries of the Kingdom; it should persist, notwithstanding the repeated petitions and remonstrances which have been presented on the subject, to enforce the impolitic duty on salt, by which much of the profit of the fisherman is destroyed. British salt, it is true, is duty free; but the fish, when cured with this, neither equal in flavour those cured with foreign salt, nor will they keep so long. The import duty on foreign salt is 2½d. per bushel. That a commutation should be taken in lieu of the duty on that salt, is very reasonable, and could not be objected to by any moderate man; and by the repeal of duty on such terms, Government would be in no wise embarrassed, while the fisheries would be greatly benefited. But on this subject I beg again to refer to the valuable work by Phelps, before noticed.

The expence of curing a hogshead of pilchards (including the value of the cask, salt,

labour, &c.) is estimated at from twenty to twenty two shillings; but it is calculated that this sum is re-imbursed by the bounty and the value of the oil. A hogshead weighs nearly five *cwt*, and may be bought, in September, at from two to five guineas;—the price, of course, varying according to the quantity caught during the season. Upwards of 30,000 hogsheads are annually consumed in England; and above 100,000 hogsheads have been exported in one year.

In concluding this article, it would be unjust to Government not to mention that, some time since, the Honourable Board of Excise was pleased, on the representation of a Missionary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to grant 1200 bushels of salt, duty free, to such of the inhabitants of these Islands as earned their livelihoods solely by fishing; which grant was afterwards increased to 2,000 bushels, which is the quantity at present annually imported into the Islands. But various complaints having been made by the fishermen of the Off-Islands relative to the distribution of the salt,—particularly as to the quantity issued, the time of its being delivered, and the price at which it was rendered;—the Author, in conjunction with Lieut. Edwin Thrackston, R. N. transmitted a Memorial to the Treasury in the beginning of the year 1821, stating the

alleged grievances, and suggesting in what manner they might best be obviated: And, by an order from their Lordships, it was accordingly directed that 1500 out of the 2,000 bushels of salt granted to Scilly, should be imported into *Tresco*, for the use of the Off-Islands;\* that *two* deliveries should take place;† that the price charged to the Islanders should not exceed eighteen pence per bushel; that a correct list should be prepared, and duly attested, of the names and employments of persons receiving the salt, in order to shew that they came within the meaning of their Lordships' grant; &c. &c. &c.‡ The allow-

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\* Before that time, the whole had been imported into *St. Mary's*, to the great inconvenience of the Off-Islanders, who (with the exception of those on *St. Agnes*) reside much nearer to *Tresco* than to the former Island.

† When the whole of the salt was delivered at *one* time, such of the Islanders as could not immediately pay for the proportion allotted to their families, were out off from enjoying the bounty of Government till the ensuing year. If they borrowed from their neighbours, such salt was liable to seizure!

‡ The amount at present allowed is one bushel (half a cwt.) per head, to each individual of the family of every fisherman, which is yet represented by some as being too small a quantity to enable them to enjoy all the advantages intended, and to save their large fish in Summer for sale, and the small ones for their Winter consumption.

ance of *twelve* hundred bushels having been subsequently ascertained sufficient for the consumption of the Off-Islanders, their Lordships were further pleased, on application of the same parties, to direct that the remaining three hundred bushels should be removed from Tresco to St. Mary's for distribution on the latter Island. These regulations have been found greatly conducive to the comfort and advantage of the *really necessitous* fishermen, and it is to be hoped that they will be permanently established.—Whether Government may hereafter be pleased,—in consequence of the increased population, the local disadvantages under which the inhabitants labour, and the scarcity of employment, which renders *fishing* necessarily *a part* of the avocations of most of the Islanders.—to grant a larger proportion of salt to the people of St. Mary's, is a subject entitled to serious consideration.

From what has already been advanced I trust that I have sufficiently shewn the origin of the recent unparalleled distress of the Scilly Islanders, and proved the humanity and policy of a further amelioration of their state; and I fervently pray that, through the fostering care of the British Legislature, the plan which has been found most calculated to afford them

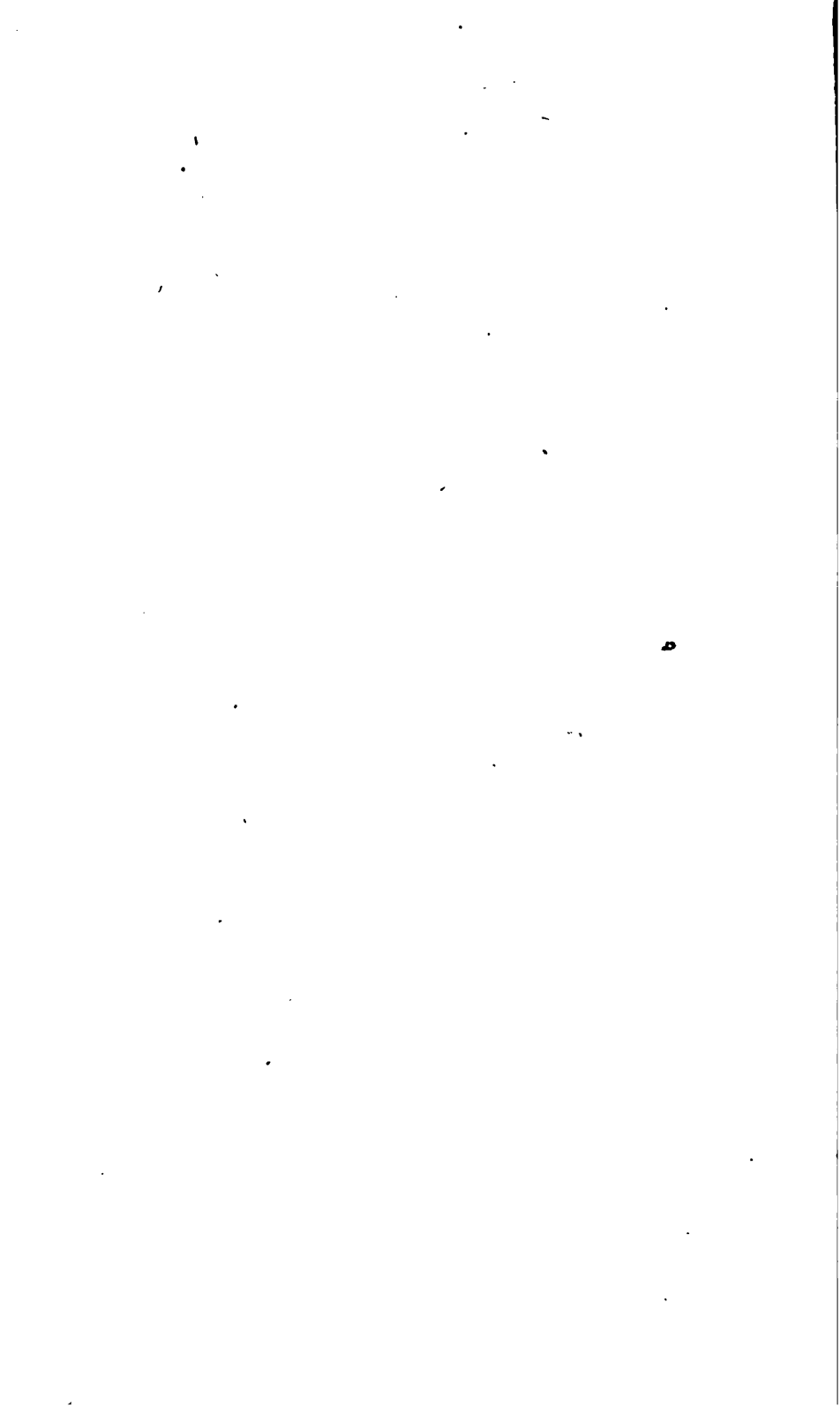
permanent and solid benefit, will be speedily brought to full maturity, and freed from all the imperfections of every prior arrangement.

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**End of Part I.**

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**VIEW**  
**OF THE**  
**PRESENT STATE**  
**OF THE**  
**SCILLY ISLANDS.**

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**Part II.**

**PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION.**

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**CHAPTER I.**

**St. MARY's.**

*Position. — Dimensions and Population. — HUGH TOWN. — Buildings described. — Market. — Prices of Provisions. — St. MARY'S POOL. — Carns, Bays, Hills, &c. — Appearance of the Eastern Shore of the Harbour. — The Telegraph. — Buzza Hill. — Observations on Pyramids and Burrows, (note.) — Peninis, with its remarkable Land and Sea Rocks. — Druidical Remains. — Remarks on the Formation of Rock Basons. — Piper's Hole. — St. Mary's Church, its miserable condition. — OLD TOWN, Bay, and Castle. — Moors. — Carns, Logan Stones, &c. — Giant's Castle. — Sallakee Downs. — Burrows, Rocks, and Druidical Temple. — Porth Hellick. —*

*Grave of Sir Cloudesley Shovel.*—*Various Objects noticed.*—*Sun Rock, and Giant's Chair.*—*Mount Toddin.*—*Pellestree Downs.*—*Fresh Water Stream, the only one on St. Mary's.*—*Sandy Bar, joined to St. Martin's Flats.*—*Penrithen, Hellingy Downs.*—*General Appearance of the Interior of the Island.*—*Hamlets.*—*Holy Vale, Tremulithen, and Newford, remarkable for Trees and Gardens.*—*Wells.*—*THE GARRISON.*—*Extent and Nature of the Works.*—*Star Castle.*—*Batteries.*—*Privileges of the Lieut. Governor.*—*Remarkable Rocks.*—*Rat Island.*—*State of Manners, Society, Amusements, and Education, at St. Mary's.*—*Libraries, and Literary Institutions.*—*Packets.*—*Different Improvements recommended.*—*Inundations of Hugh Town.*—*Embankment.*—*THE EASTERN ISLANDS.*

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**ST. MARY'S**, the principal of the Scilly Islands for size, population, and convenience, and which is also the seat of the civil and military government, lies on the South-East side of the whole group; the centre of the Island being in a direct line, due West, from the Lizard Point. This Island, with the exception of the promontories of the *Hengh* (or

*Hugh*) and *Peninis Head*, is of a compact form, though diversified by a number of petty bays and headlands, the former of which are skirted with sand, while the latter, and indeed every other part of the shores, are girded with rocks. St. Mary's is about eight miles in circumference; two miles and a half in length; and one mile and a half in breadth; and contains, by estimation, 1640 acres, about one half of which is in a state of cultivation; and one half (at least) of the remaining part is very capable of being brought into the same state; the soil being generally good, and the produce of the crops, especially of corn and potatoes, luxuriant.

The population is about fourteen hundred souls.

*Hugh Town*, the principal town in the Island, is situated partly on a low sandy peninsula, which joins St. Mary's to the hill called the *Hugh*—(now more commonly known as the *Garrison*)—and partly at the bottom of that hill.\* It consists of one principal street,

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\* In various parts of Cornwall, during the fishing season, persons called *hwers* are stationed on the cliffs to watch the approach and direction of the shoals, which they indicate to the fishermen by a particular *hue* or cry. May not the *Hugh* at St. Mary's derive its name from having been formerly used as an eligible station by such watchers? On the other hand, however, it may be asked,

about three hundred and twenty yards long, but very irregular both in its course and in the appearance of the houses; and of several lanes, alleys, courtlages, &c.; most of which are paved with round stones, but all undistinguished by any peculiar appellation. The houses are built of stone, which is procured in great abundance in every part of the neighbourhood; but few of them are more than two stories high. The walls are thick, but the foundation, being chiefly in sand, is not more than a foot deep! The rooms in general are low, and uncieled; the best rooms in many of the houses presenting the appearance of a ship's cabin, with the beams and planks overhead painted white!<sup>b</sup> Many of the houses are covered with tiles; others are roofed with slate, but those of the poorer classes are thatched, which always has an appearance of

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(granting the probability of this etymology) Whence are we to derive the name of the *Gugh* at St. Agnes, which lies exactly opposite the *Hugh*, and which, like that hill, is only joined to the Island by a narrow neck of sand?

<sup>b</sup> The assertion of some writers,—that most of the furniture of these houses is made from the materials of wrecked vessels,—is false. Whatever materials are salvaged from wrecks are deposited in charge of proper persons, who pay the salvors the sum to which they are legally entitled for the same.

wretchedness.<sup>c</sup> As there is something peculiar in the manner of thatching houses in Scilly, it may be observed that, owing to the great prevalence of boisterous winds here,—especially from the autumnal to the vernal equinox,—the inhabitants are under the necessity of securing their roofs in the best manner which their means will afford. For this purpose, they drive large wooden pegs into the chinks between the stones, about a foot and a half from the top of the walls, and but at a little distance from each other. Having laid on a sufficient quantity of thatch, they bind it down with straw ropes, fastened to the pegs before mentioned, extending from the front to the back of the house, and intersected by ropes of the same material running from end to end; so that, if the ropes hold, the roof cannot be blown away without taking with it the top part of the wall! The *appearance* of these roofs, certainly, does not convey the idea of a *cottage ornée*, but use and custom must justify the practice.<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> *Except, perhaps, in*

———“ *a cottage of gentility;*”

Which “pleases” that fiend “whose darling vice  
Is the pride that *apes humility!*”

<sup>d</sup> Notwithstanding these measures of the Islanders, houses are frequently unroofed here in blowing weather, and the thatch on the whole is generally replenished soon

There are several *shops* in Hugh Town, especially for grocery, drapery, earthen-ware, &c. and almost all sorts of handicrafts are exercised on the Island; and, in many branches, workmen may be found here of very good abilities. Here is also a great number of inns, the principal of which are dignified by the name of *Hotels*! As no taxes are paid on the Islands, every person is free to sell either spirituous or malt liquors;—a privilege of some importance during the continuance of a fleet or convoy in the Roads.

At the North end of the principal street is the *Pier* or *Quay*; at the back of which are some store-houses and workshops. The former pier was built about the year 1601, but, having become very ruinous, it was taken down and the present erected on its site, between the years 1749 and 1751, by the late Francis, Earl of Godolphin, at an expence of eleven hundred pounds; which, considering the facility of procuring stones on the spot, will be thought no small sum. It is four hundred and thirty feet long, and about twenty broad, and

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after harvest. Rafters or battens of wood, laid longitudinally on the houses, and secured by ropes of a more imperishable material than straw, would be very desirable to prevent a recurrence of the inconveniences generally sustained by the poor from a violent gale.

is defended from the sea by a high substantial wall. For the convenience of landing, there is a flight of steps on its extremity, and another within the pool, but the former is dangerously out of repair.\*

About twenty yards from the pier, an opening in a small kind of a square, on the right, shews the steep ascent to the garrison. A few yards further, another opening to the left ( called *the Bank* ) shews the pool and beach, studded with boats. At a little distance is the house of the collector of the Customs, which was built about the year 1696. It is low, and old fashioned, but of considerable length. The office, or *Custom House*, which is behind the dwelling, is airy, spacious, and commodious.

About thirty yards further, on the left, is a mean little building, the lower part of which is generally shut up, distinguished by the various names of the *Court House*, the *Council Hall* and the *Market House*! It is twenty seven feet long, fifteen broad, and ten high. The " Duke's Court," or " Council,"—who generally meet in the forenoon of the last Friday in every month,—occupy the upper room, of the length and breadth of the whole

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\* See a plan for the improvement of the Pool and extension of the quay, at the latter part of this chapter.



building: During the rest of the month this place is used as a school room. Beneath, is the *town prison*; adjoining which is a small room about the size of an ordinary butcher's stall, where, commonly at the latter end of the week, the carcase of a bullock, and sometimes that of a sheep, or lamb, is exposed for sale; but the best parts are generally previously bespoken by the resident gentry, &c. the farmers seldom venturing to slaughter an animal until the greater part of it is engaged. The person who sends the meat "*to market*," pays for the use of the stall, block, weights, &c., one shilling. A few vegetables are sometimes brought into the street on horses, and either pitched near the before-mentioned place, or offered for sale from house to house; and this is the only kind of market in Scilly.—Most of the inhabitants have gardens in which they raise a few vegetables, or else they buy from the farmers according to their necessities. Poultry and fish are sometimes offered from house to house, as it may suit the inclination of the owners to dispose of them.

The following is an accurate list of the prices at which provisions are generally sold at Scilly at present, and may be considered as a fair average for the year. It may gratify curiosity to learn what proportion these charges bear to those of above half a century ago; and

therefore, so far as Heath enables me, I shall set down his statement in an opposite column.

	<i>Present Prices, (1822.)</i>	<i>Prices in 1750.</i>
Beef, <i>per lb.</i> .....	.....4 <i>d.</i> .....	.....2½ <i>d.</i> .....
Mutton — .....	..4 <i>d.</i> to 4½ <i>d.</i> ..	..2½ <i>d.</i> to 3 <i>d.</i> ..
Lamb — .....	.....4 <i>d.</i> .....	.....2½ <i>d.</i> .....
Pork — .....	.....3½ <i>d.</i> .....	..2½ <i>d.</i> to 3 <i>d.</i> ..
Butter (from England)	1 <i>s.</i> 3 <i>d.</i> to 1 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	(“scarce”)
Potatoes, <i>per bushel of</i> 24 gallons .....	..2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> to 3 <i>s.</i> ..	(Price not specified.)
Apples, <i>per 100</i> .....	..2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> to 4 <i>s.</i> ..	(Ditto)
A Goose, <i>weighing a-</i> <i>bout 5½ lbs.</i> .....	.... 2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> ....	(Ditto)
Live Ducks, <i>per couple</i>	1 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i> to 1 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i>	(Ditto)
— Fowls, <i>ditto</i>	1 <i>s.</i> 2 <i>d.</i> to 1 <i>s.</i> 4 <i>d.</i>	.....1 <i>s.</i> .....
Eggs, <i>per doz</i> .....	... 3 <i>d.</i> to 4 <i>d.</i> ...	.....2½ <i>d.</i> .....
A Turbot .....	1 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> to 2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>	.... 1 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> ....
Soles, <i>per pair</i> .....	.... 1 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> ....	(Not specified)
Cod, <i>fresh</i> .....	...9 <i>d.</i> to 1 <i>s.</i> ...	(Ditto)
— <i>cured, per lb.</i> ....	.....3 <i>d.</i> .....	.....2 <i>d.</i> .....
Ling, <i>cured, per lb.</i> ...	.....4½ <i>d.</i> .....	.....4 <i>d.</i> .....
Mullet .....	.....6 <i>d.</i> .....	(Not specified)
Lobsters ( <i>each</i> ).....	...6 <i>d.</i> to 8 <i>d.</i> ...	(Ditto)
Crabs ( <i>small</i> ).....	.....1 <i>d.</i> .....	(Ditto)

All other kinds of Fish in proportion.

It may be remarked, on the above list, that the beef in general is thin, as is the mutton and lamb, and seldom equal,—in weight, quality, or flavour,—to what is killed in England, which must be owing to the scantiness of pasture in Scilly. Poultry of all sorts is in

poor condition when sold, and must be fattened by the purchaser. Vegetables, particularly potatoes, are very good: The Scilly apples are peculiarly large.—The fish are excellent, but not so plentiful, near the Islands, as might be supposed from the reasonableness of the price.—Barley is generally cultivated by the natives for their own use, but wheat is mostly procured from Penzance and its neighbourhood, at the common market price of Cornwall.

The *Steward's House*, near the end of the principal street, is a substantial and well-built edifice; having good and extensive fruit and flower gardens behind, in which are some fine mulberry trees, and vines producing grapes of large size and excellent flavour.

Near this, is the *Post Office*; and, a little further on, the houses, forming somewhat of a square, stretch along the two sides of the sandy isthmus before mentioned, the open space in the centre being distinguished by the name of *the Green*, or *the Parade*. The former appellation is most inapplicable to its present state, not the least sign of vegetation of any sort appearing on its arid surface. Its latter denomination was derived from its being the place of assembly and muster of the sea-fencibles in time of war.

The Parade is terminated on the East by a single dwelling house; at either end of which

a hard road leads to different parts of the Island.

The road on the left is lined by a row of small houses, extending nearly as far as Carn Thomas. In front is seen a fine sandy beach, sloping with a very gradual descent towards the pool, which is generally enlivened by the presence of boats and vessels of various sizes ; and the view of the roads and Off-Islands, from this place, as well as from most other parts of St. Mary's, is very pleasing.

*Carn Thomas*, as it is corruptly called at present, is a bold point of land projecting about one hundred yards into St. Mary's Pool, and dividing it into two beautiful bays. The top and sides of this point are clothed with grass, and a school-house is erected towards that end nearest the road. The carn is a cluster of grey rocks, presenting a compact appearance to the sea, but consisting of every diversity of form and size, and skirted round the base with an immense number of rocks and stones of a brown and sable hue. The height of the top stone of the carn is about eighty feet above the level of the sea. <sup>f</sup>

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<sup>f</sup> It is much to be regretted that no records whatever remain, to enable us to fix, with precision, the orthography of any of the places in Scilly ; most of the names of which, have been so vitiated by a false pronunciation, as to render

On the Eastern side of Carn Thomas, is another fine bay called *Permellin* or *Porth Mellyn*, which might be made an excellent bathing-place, to the great advantage of the Proprietor of the Islands and of those who might visit them in search of health or relaxation. The hilly ground on the East side, offers a fine site for the erection of such houses as might be required for the use of those occasional visitants;—combining retirement of situation, with salubrity of air, and extent and diversity of prospect. The beach shelves almost imperceptibly to a great extent, and the sand here is of a remarkably fine quality, and “much coveted,” says Troutbeck, “by the Cornish people and others, for scouring brass, pewter, &c. and for drying up writing ink.” Even in Heath’s time, “presents were made of it to many parts of England, as a curiosity.”—The circuit of the beach, at high water mark, is about one hundred and sixty yards.

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it necessary to have recourse to etymological researches as often as we would discover the true import of their discriminative appellations. In the present instance, however, the task of derivation does not appear difficult: As *carn* (or *cairn*) is a Cornu-British word, signifying “a heap of rocks,” naturally or artificially piled, I hesitate not to add to it the British word *Tommen* (bearing a close affinity to the Latin *Tumulus*)—“a little hill;” by which compound-name this point of land is exactly described: q. d. *A little hill with a heap of rocks.*

The high land on the Eastern side of the harbour presents a diversified appearance; but none of the objects require a very minute description. Adjoining Permellin is *Mount Flagon*,<sup>\*</sup> on which are the remains of a strong building, called *Harry's Walls*. This was intended for a fort, and was begun in the reign of Henry the Eighth, before any other regular fortifications were erected on the Island; but the situation was ill chosen, and therefore, probably, the work was abandoned at an early stage. There is a curtain, with two bastions, remaining; the latter are hollow, and project with very acute angles. The length of the whole is sixty two yards; the face of each bastion, sixteen yards; the walls are from ten to twelve feet thick, and about five feet high. Such was the peculiar excellence of the cement used in this work, that but few of the stones have been dislodged, notwithstanding the ex-

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<sup>\*</sup> Quære, *Flegon*, ἡ Φλεγών, *flagro*? This, I own, might seem a far-fetched derivation, did not the name of an adjoining tract,—*Brimstone Hill*—seem to give some colouring to the supposition. I am at a loss, however, to conjecture what affinity may have been between these names and the places to which they are applied, unless beacons were formerly lighted on this part of the Island;—a supposition by no means improbable when it is considered that this is nearly the highest part of St. Mary's, and commands both the bays.

ertions that have been made for that purpose ; and the fortress may probably remain in its present state for centuries to come.

On the North side of this foot, and nearly on the summit of the hill, is an erect flat stone, overgrown with moss, but with no vestige of an inscription. It stands about ten feet above the ground, and is supposed by some authors to have been an object of Druidical worship.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Although it is not intended here,—especially after the numerous and elaborate Disquisitions which have made their appearance within the last fifty years,—to enter into a particular investigation of the religious rites of the ancients; yet it may be briefly remarked that the custom of setting up stones, either as objects of adoration, or in commemoration of some extraordinary event, is of the remotest antiquity, and is frequently noticed in the Holy Scriptures.\* In the system of Druidism, the principles of religion and government were blended, and the scene of their administration of the rites of either, was generally the summit of a hill, in a space sometimes surrounded by circles of stones,—sometimes inclosed by circular mounds of earth,—and in some cases only marked by a solitary pillar, which antiquarians generally (though perhaps improperly) denominate a *rock deity*. The spot thus consecrated by their idols and incantations, was universally held sacred, and was termed by the Cornish Britons, *Gorsedd*, signifying, *the seat of judgement*.

Many more particulars of Druidical rites and remains will be noticed hereafter.

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\* Gen. xxviii, 18. and xxxv, 14. Lev. xxvi, 1. Deut. xxix, 17. Josh. xxiv, 27. I Sam. vii, 12. Dan. v, 4. and *et. fræq.*

Further to the Northward, but still forming part of the Eastern (or rather North-Eastern) shore of the Pool, are two low and long-protruding ledges of brown rocks,—the greater part of which is covered at high water;—the innermost being called *Pym's 'Island,'* and the other, *Taylor's 'Island,'* on the latter of which is a large cluster of grey rocks, declining from the sea. Both of these *Islands* bear a little coarse grass, and there is no reason to doubt that they were once joined to St. Mary's by a vegetable soil, although they are now only connected by long ranges of large stones. Indeed the earthy cliffs of the contiguous part of St. Mary's are diminishing almost daily, as well by the act of the natives (who carry away the soil for various purposes) as by the continued washing of the sea.

St. Mary's Pool, or Harbour, is terminated on the North Eastern side by a point, crowned and surrounded with rocks, called *Carn Mor-val*; near which are two sunken rocks, called *the Cow* and *the Calf*. Between these, there is a safe passage or channel, about a hundred yards wide, by which ships may come into the Pool. There are some other rocks and ledges in the neighbourhood, but too well known to the pilots to occasion apprehensions of danger, and too uninteresting in themselves to need particular enumeration.



The Eastern shore of the Pool presents a varied aspect, and not of an unpleasing nature. Dark and grey rocks, petty bays, yellow cliffs, cots and fields diversify the scene; the background of which, rising to a considerable height, is crowned by the solitary *Telegraph*;—a round tower, built of stone, consisting of four stories, and covered with a flat roof or platform, from which very extensive views of the different Islands, and occasionally of vessels navigating the surrounding seas, may be obtained. The Telegraph is forty two feet high; and, as it stands on the loftiest part of the Island,—the height of which is one hundred and forty feet above the level of the sea,—the altitude of the top of the tower is one hundred and eighty two feet above that line. At first the Telegraph was surmounted by a lofty flag-staff, for the purpose of making signals; but the situation being so very much exposed, the staff was removed, and is now erected on the ground near the building.—Captain Manby's apparatus for effecting a communication with shipwrecked vessels is deposited in the Telegraph; but the invention is not calculated to be of much utility at Scilly.

The road on the *right* side of the Parade before mentioned, leads, in the first place, (after passing the head of Porth Cressa) to a little hamlet at the back of the Town, called

*Down Derry*; diverging thence, in a South-erly direction, a branch to the right leads to the top of *Buzza Hill*; and another branch, on the same side, leads to *Peninis*. The main road, however, continues pretty direct until it touches the path leading (through some fields) to the Church; but at that point it turns off to the Eastward, and, forming some sinuosities on the declivity of the hill, passes through *Old Town* into "*the Country*." Of these places I shall treat in the succession in which I have here arranged them.

*Porth Cressa* is a large bay or cove, lying to the Southward of the isthmus before mentioned, and opposite to St. Mary's Pool. It is bounded on the Western side by a part of the garrison, and, towards the East, by the hills leading to *Peninis*; and is remarkable for its numerous ledges of rocks, which render it navigable only by boats. It is skirted on either side by rocks, brown and grey, of different sizes, and stones of varied figures and dimensions, but chiefly of a granitic or flinty substance: Sand, of various colours and degrees of fineness, forms a spacious beach at its head. The rocks of a brown and blackish hue, are those in and nearest to the sea; and of these kinds there are some enormous blocks, resting on very small stones projecting a little way above the surface of the beach, by

which they are wholly supported. This circumstance shews that they have either fallen from the neighbouring hill of Buzza by the removal of the earth—(perhaps in consequence of heavy rains;)—or have been thrown thence by some violent convulsion: The former supposition will, without doubt, appear the more easy and probable. A fine sand is found on the Eastern side of the Porth; and, on thrusting a stick into some parts of this sand, I have discovered a kind of clay, which, from its colour, was evidently formed by the wasting of the neighbouring shore, where the sea has visibly made great ravages.<sup>1</sup>

*Buzza Hill* would be sufficiently described to a Cornish reader, by calling it Carn Bré in miniature. To others, it may be necessary to state that it consists of vast masses or blocks of granite; here, protruding their grey tops above the furze and fern that fringe its rugged brow and sides;—there, recumbent in every posture on the smaller rocks which still remain partly imbedded in the soil, and seeming to threaten the passenger who winds his way at the base of the hill, with an instantaneous

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<sup>1</sup> For a further account of Porth Cressa, with a view to improvement, see the latter part of this chapter.

crush beneath their ponderous and (apparently) ill-supported bulks.<sup>1</sup>

On the top of Buzza Hill are three *cromlechs*.<sup>1</sup> The principal of these, stands (or

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<sup>1</sup> As a specimen of the size of some of these enormous masses, I subjoin the dimensions of one now lying on the side of the hill, a little above the road, which appears to have fallen off—or to have been broken—from another rock, and rests in a slanting position on some small stones, having a large hollow between it and the ground:—Length, six yards; average breadth, three yards and a half; average thickness, four feet.

(N. B. Since the above was first written, the rock or stone alluded to, has been split and partly conveyed away, for the purpose of being used in an embankment at the head of Porth Cressa.)

<sup>1</sup> A *cromlech* is a large flat stone, lying in a horizontal position upon others fixed upright in the ground;—a rude model of a modern tomb. A *burrow*, or *barrow*, is a large sepulchral cave, covered by a mound of earth. Cornwall, as well as Scilly, abounds with these repositories of the ancient dead; and in that county, as well as in these Islands, all the burrows that have been opened have been found constructed in nearly a similar manner, whence they are supposed to have been appropriated like family vaults. Nothing has yet been discovered in these venerable remains of elder days to repay the curiosity of the explorer, but fragments of coarse urns, ashes, bones, and unctuous earth.—A modern grave is but a diminutive modification of an ancient burrow.

It would, doubtless, to many, seem bold, to assert that the word *burrow*, which we have generally been taught to consider as purely British, is derived from the *Greek*; or,

rather *stood*, for it is even now suffering demolition by the hand of man) in the centre, sur-

rather, from the Egyptian: Yet this admits of proof, as does also the still more (seemingly) strange assertion, that it is nearly of the same import as *pyramid*,—both words and works alike signifying—a *memorial of the dead*.

For the establishment of these points. I shall call to my aid the abilities of an ingenious French writer.—

“The word *pyramid*,” says Volney,\* “is derived from the Greek Πυράμις, Πυραμίδος; but in the ancient Greek the *v* was pronounced *oo*. we should therefore say *pooramis*. When the Greeks, after the Trojan war, frequented Egypt, they could not have in their language the name of these prodigious edifices, which must have been new to them; they must have borrowed it from the Egyptians. *Pooramis*, then, is not Greek, but Egyptian. Now there is little doubt but the dialects of Egypt, which were various, had a great analogy with those of the neighbouring countries, such as Arabic and Syriac. In these languages it is certain the letter *p* is unknown, but it is no less true that the Greeks, in adopting barbarous words, almost always changed them, and frequently confounded one sound with another which resembled it. It is certain also, that in the words we know, *p* is constantly taken for *b*, which very much resembles it. Now, in the dialect of Palestine, *bour* (כור) signifies every excavation of the earth; a *cistern*; a *prison*, properly underground; a *sepulchre*; (See Buxtorf, *Lexicon Hebr.*) There remains *amis*, in which the final *s* appears to me a substitution for *t*, which did not suit the genius of the Greek tongue, and which made the oriental (חמת) *a-mit*, of the dead; *bour*

\* Travels in Egypt and Syria, vol. I. p. 269.

rounded by a mound of earth (or *burrow*) about thirty yards in circumference, the whole being inclosed by a number of large stones, some erect and some recumbent; having two of a very large size at the North-East, and two similar at the South-West end. On the

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*a-mit, cave of the dead*: this substitution of the *s* for *t*, has an example in *atribis*, well known to be *atribit*. The learned may determine whether this etymology be not equally plausible with many others."

After having had my way thus cleared for me, it only remains to shew why the word of two syllables, *burrow* was adopted instead of the Phœnician *bouramit*. Perhaps the following explanations will be sufficient.

The word *bou* itself signifying a *sepulchre*, the oriental termination might thence have been rejected; to signify, by such rejection, a diminution of the idea of splendour and magnificence inseparable from the original word, yet still retaining sufficient to shew the nature of the thing spoken of. The termination which is now fixed by the characters *ow*, was probably, in the first place, nothing more than the vocal sound invariably heard after the pronunciation of the rough *r*. Thus *bou'* or *bourra*, both in etymology and signification, has a close affinity with the *Πυραμὶς* of the Greeks: There is a sufficient relationship established between the words as well as the things to mark their common origin; yet a sufficient diversity in the pronunciation of the one, and the formation of the other, to shew the essential difference. A *pyramid* is an elongated cone;—a *burrow* is an obtuse cone. Oriental sovereigns repose under the one;—occidental chieftains (or, perchance, men of more ignoble fame) sleep equally sound, and equally forgotten, beneath the other!

former appeared to have been some *rock-basins*. The dimensions of the cromlech were as follow: Length, eight feet; breadth, five feet; depth of the wall, three feet. Over the South-West end of this, as well as of the other cromlechs, a large flat rock was placed, covering about one third of the vault.

The traditions of the Islanders have handed down the fame of those places as the sepulchres of giants. Some years ago, according to Troutbeck, "a curious gentleman hired labourers to open some of these burrows, to see if they could find the remains of any thing that might have been deposited in them." The results, however, were similar to those which I have before mentioned; but, "a little while after the workmen had finished opening these burrows, there happened a most violent storm of rain, attended with dreadful peals of thunder and lightning, which the Islanders said was occasioned by disturbing these ancient sepulchres." Such superstitious notions are every where common, but I hope it will not seem tending to confirm them if I mention a circumstance remarkably coincident with the above: On the 22nd day of November, 1820, the larger burrow was again opened—having been fixed on as the site of a windmill (since completed,)—and on that day we also had a storm of thunder and lightning, although

these natural phenomena but rarely occur in Scilly.

Leaving Buzza Hill, nothing of peculiar importance presents itself till the traveller arrives at Peninis Point; although the eye may occasionally wander over the well-cultivated fields on either side of the road, or contemplate the different carns that crown the distant eminences,—the varied ledges and rocks, against which the swelling waves wage continued hostility,—or the ridging and leafless hills of the Island of St. Agnes, which here opens to the view in a very pleasing manner.

*Peninis Head, or Point*, is an extensive tract of land, projecting boldly into the deep in a Southerly direction; and, in a manner, covered and surrounded by tremendous masses of rock of every wild and grotesque appearance. Seen from the opposite shore of the Garrison, Peninis Head is marked by three distinct carns, rising abruptly from the sea, the intervals of ground between these carns becoming more and more stony in proportion to their relative nearness to the extreme point. It is impossible for words to describe the astonishing number and diversified forms of the romantic masses with which Peninis abounds, and which cannot fail to excite a mingled feeling of admiration and awe. Here, a dark and enormous pile rises erect from the pro-



fundity of water which surround it, and scowls defiance on the ever-renewed—ever-impotent,—attacks of the eddying and hollow-gurgling waves: There, tremendous slabs lie heaped in fearful confusion; at once inviting, yet menacing, the steps of the inquisitive spectator. One large group which overhangs the deep is particularly distinguishable for the great number of horizontal lines into which its surface has been worn by the weather. Behind this, and forming a part of the same group, an immense block, measuring about six yards each way, supports another of the same bulk, in ponderous magnificence:—The angular asperities of each having been destroyed by the change of seasons, the effect of their present appearance is greatly heightened, as well by this circumstance, as by the immediate proximity of a very tall and thin rock, of a pyramidal form, being thirty feet high, twelve feet broad at the bottom, and regularly tapering to a point. This rock is thought, by some, to have been a distinguished object of Druidical veneration.<sup>m</sup>

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<sup>m</sup> An anonymous but intelligent writer, treating of “the grotesque and whimsical appearances of rocky masses, such as *rock idols*, *logan stones*, &c.” explains those appearances upon “the tendency which granite possesses of wearing more rapidly on the angles and edges than on the sides, a fact which probably depends upon a peculiar crys-

On the brow of the promontory of Peninis,—which is pleasingly though wildly diversified with grey rocks and verdant turf,—a very singular cluster of enormous masses of granite, extending from East to West upwards of fifty yards, appears to lie on the surface of the earth, without being imbedded in it. These

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talline arrangement of their parts disposing them to disintegrate with a rapidity proportionate to their distance from a central point. Thus," he adds, "upon simple and philosophical principles are such appearances easily explained, and this *phantasmagoria* of learned antiquaries vanishes."

(*Guide to Mount's Bay and the Land's End*, p. 138.)

Agreeing with this author and others in their endeavours to account for many of those *rock curiosities* by natural causes; I am not, however, prepared to admit that the whole fabric of Druidical rites and sacrifices which so many "learned antiquaries" have been at such pains to investigate and explain must necessarily "vanish" on the production of a pleasing hypothesis. Rocks and stones certainly served many important purposes in the ceremonies of the Druids, whether of a civil or religious nature; and, whatever may become of the question of the formation of rock basons and rock idols, there are sufficient indications—as well in Scilly as in different parts of Cornwall,—of the art of man having been frequently employed in the disposition and arrangement of many of those rugged blocks with which these parts abound. The examination of a Druidical temple, or circle, (to say nothing of single pillars, cromlechs, &c.) will be sufficient to put this fact beyond dispute.

are known to the modern Islanders by the familiar name of *the Kettle and Pans*, from the immense hollows, or rock-basins, which are found in most of them. These basins are generally about three feet in diameter, and two feet deep. They are, for the most part, of a circular form, and perfectly concave; others, however, are much indented at the sides, like a hollow globe; some have perpendicular sides, and flat bottoms; some are of an oval form; and others of no regular figure. Many of the blocks, included in the general name of the *Kettle and Pans*, are six or seven yards high, and eight or nine yards square; and several of these have four, five, six, or more of these cavities in them. A large rock near the extremity of this group, has two basins of an immense size, besides several smaller ones. The upper and larger one appears to have been formed by the junction of three or more large ones: It is irregularly shaped, and is about eighteen feet in circumference, and six feet deep. When the water in this basin has attained the height of three feet, it discharges itself, by a lip, into a lower basin, more regularly formed, the back of which is about five feet high, but which is incapable of containing more than a depth of two feet of water, owing to the declivity of the surface of the rock. This latter basin also discharges its redundant

waters, by a lip, or opening, at the edge of the bason, in the fore part of the rock.

Some authors have imagined that all rock basons are the works of art; and they have never seen a work of this nature without conjuring up a host of Druids with all their mystic rites and absurd superstitions. An examination of the rocks at Peninis might tend to correct this mistake, as there are, perhaps, as many of those basons, small and large, on the different rocks on and near that point as there are inhabitants on the Island! It seems more consonant to nature and reason to suppose that these cavities owe their formation entirely to natural causes. Granite, it is well known, is a porous stone, capable of receiving and imbibing moisture. The lodgement of a single drop of rain on one of those rocks, might be the commencement of that slow but certain operation by which those vast hollows have been shaped. That "waters wear the stones," is a truth taught by Scripture,\* and capable of ocular demonstration. Where one drop of rain has fallen, another may settle, and many will surely follow if there be (as may well be supposed on the surface of all rocks) the slightest inequality on the spot where they descend. By the collection and

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\* Job xiv. 19.

settlement of this small body of water, the earthy particles found in granite formations, become at length saturated, and lose the sparry substances imbedded in them. The action of violent winds, by agitating the water, whirls round those sparry and angular substances against the sides of the little cavity. The air itself, strongly impregnated as it is with sharp and saline qualities, may aid the work of excavation; every subsequent shower gives a new impetus to the agent employed in these operations, and the lapse of centuries surely affords sufficient time to complete even works of the magnitudes which have just been mentioned.

It may be asked,—If these cavities or basons be wholly produced by natural causes, whence arises the difference of their formation? and why are the bottoms of some, concave; and of others, flat?

I answer,—The bottoms of the larger basons, which always contain a certain quantity of water, are invariably flat. This is the necessary result of the water settling in a state of rest, when the particles of earth and stone sink to the bottom; form a perfect level; and, perhaps, become again in some measure cohesive and indurated. In the smaller and concave basons the water is absorbed by the heat in summer, and the particles of sand

which had been washed off the rock during the friction, are peculiarly liable, in their dry state and exposed situation, to be blown away by every gale. Other irregularities of form may be accounted for by a consideration of the different proportions of lightness and hardness frequently observable in the same piece of granite.

Lastly :—It has been stated by those who consider these formations as solely of Druidical origin and use, that rock-basons have never been found on the *sides* of rocks, unless such rocks have been overturned by violence, and thrown, with their basons, from their natural position.—A plain fact shall overturn this argument.—

There is, in the Westernmost cairn at Peninis, a huge rock, standing on another, and sheltered by higher and close-surrounding rocks, both towards the sea and the land. It has every appearance of having remained in its present position ever since the Flood. Yet *in the side* of this rock is an excavation, like a niche; of an oval form,—six feet long, five feet wide and nearly four feet deep. There is an opening at the top, through which the rain may have run, to form, or assist in the formation of, the hollow; which, however, can hold but little water, as there are two outlets at the bottom, and therefore in Summer it is

perfectly dry. In this natural excavation, or rocky chair, I have more than once found a solitary seat.

And this shall suffice on the subject of rock-basons.

The shores around Peninis, as well on its Eastern as on its Western sides, present every variety of rocky appearance, to which the imaginations of the spectators have led them to affix various whimsical appellations, as *the Pulpit Rock*, *the Jolly Rock*, and some others of less fanciful denomination.

On the East side of the rocks called the Kettle and Pans, was an old sod battery, constructed in the time of Queen Anne, and planted with guns to defend the entrance into the adjacent bays. It has long been demolished, but the platform still remains, and shews it was but of small extent and little use.

On the North Eastern side of Peninis is a place called *Piper's Hole*, of which Heath gives the following account; (which Troutbeck copies, with some slight transpositions.)

"Piper's Hole has its situation under the high banks of Peninnis, being about the South West" [South East] "part of the Island next the sea, which washes its orifice at high tide. This passage is said to communicate under ground with the Island of Tresco, as far as the North-West cliffs or banks of it, next that

sea, where another orifice is seen that goes by the same name with the former."

"Going in at the orifice," he continues, "at Peninnis banks in St. Mary's, it is above a man's height, and of as much space in its breadth; but grows lower and narrower farther in. A little beyond which entrance appear rocky basons, or reservoirs, continually running over with fresh water, descending as it distils from the sides of the rocky passage: By the fall of water heard, farther in, it is probable there may be rocky descents in the passage: The drippings from the sides have worn the passage, as far as it can be seen, into various angular surfaces. Strange stories are related of this passage, of men going so far in that never returned; of dogs going quite through, and coming out at Tresco, with most of their hair off, and such like incredibles. But its retired situation, where lovers retreat to indulge their mutual passion"—(and to "cut the initial letters of their names upon the green turfy downs," according to Troutbeck)—"*has made it almost as famous as the cave wherein Dido and Æneas met of old!*"

This account, (to use a French expression) "surpasses hyperbole." Whoever takes the trouble of visiting *Piper's Hole* at St. Mary's,

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\* Heath, pp. 60, 1, compare Troutbeck, p. 68.



will find, after much difficulty and some danger in scrambling over the rugged rocks that surround it, that the place is not worth the labour of seeking.<sup>p</sup> It is a narrow aperture in the side of a cliff, about five feet high at the entrance, but not so wide, and diminishing rapidly in compass within a few yards from the aperture. The bottom is filled with large round stones, thrown in by the violence of the sea; which, by the constant dripping of water from above, are always wet, slippery, and dangerous to be trodden. There is a little pool of water at a few yards from the entrance, beyond which the passage is so small as to

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<sup>p</sup> The place of the same denomination at *Tresco* is really interesting, and will be found fully described in the chapter appropriated to that Island.—It is singular that some tradition of a *piper* is attached to most caves or subterraneous passages, not only on the shores of Britain, but even in foreign countries. “Among the prevalent opinions respecting them in the Highlands,” says Dr. Macculloch, “is that of their extreme depth. There is none of which it is not said that a piper has entered without ever returning, the sound of his instrument having been heard gradually expiring in the prolonged vaults.” Of one, in Sutherland, he adds, “it is asserted that whoever enters it will return without his *skin*!”—The story of the *German piper* is familiar to most readers, although the local situation of the “*Hole*” to which he is said to have charmed both mice and children to their destruction, is not exactly ascertained!

defy further ingress. So far from being the "cavern" which Troutbeck denominates it, it is neither a place of convenience nor concealment, and surely none but *very silly* lovers could think of choosing a place of retirement surrounded by rocks, filled with stones, dank with innumerable droppings, and constantly "washed by the sea at high tides"! Even smugglers would scarcely trust themselves or their commodities to such a place, which, had there been any vestiges of mining operations on Peninis, might have been thought an artificial excavation, or *adit*, formed for the purpose of carrying off the water.

Near the sea, on the Eastern side of Peninis, about three quarters of a mile distant from Hugh Town, and not a quarter of a mile from Old Town, is the *Church*. The clergyman's house and a few other dwellings formerly stood near it, and bore the name of *Church Town*, but most of those houses are now in ruins. The road to the Church, from Hugh Town, is hard and dry, being made by a composition of the loamy soil (which the Islanders call *ram*) and fine sand. The Church is a wretched-looking fabric, built of stone, and in form of a cross, but the walls are very low. The length of the church, from East to West is sixty feet; breadth eighteen feet; The cross-aisle is about the same length, but not

more than sixteen feet broad. No records are extant to shew the date of the erection of the Church. The North aisle was built in 1662, and the South aisle in 1677. The windows are small, irregular, leaded, and gloomy. The Church has no tower—(in which respect it resembles all the other Churches of Scilly, except that at St. Agnes)—but two low stone walls for a belfry. The roof, which is much decayed, is covered with slate, but this is neither plastered nor whitewashed on the inside, and the display of black and mouldering beams and rafters contributes to give the place a very dreary appearance. There is no vestry-room. (What Heath calls “a *court-house*, otherwise *parish-house*,” and which stands near the Church, is, literally, a *stable*!) There is no organ; and, until very lately, even vocal music had fallen into disuse here. A broken font stands in an obscure corner near the West end of the building;—the pavement is very irregular, and much mutilated; and most of the pews and galleries are crazy, and declining every way from their perpendicularity. The Church-yard, which bears no inscription worth copying,<sup>1</sup> is over-run with weeds; and the whole appearance of the building and its

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<sup>1</sup> One, however, deserves notice on account of its language:—It is written in *Dutch*!

appendages, external and internal, is calculated rather to chill than to excite devotion.\*

The bodies of Henry Trelawney, Esq. son of Sir Jonathan Trelawney, Lord Bishop of Winchester, of the ancient family of Trelawney in Cornwall;—of Sir John Narborough, son-in-law of Sir Cloudesley Shovel;—and of Captain Edmund Lodes; all of whom perished with the Admiral, in the wreck of the Association, before noticed, were buried in the chancel of St. Mary's Church, but no monument records their disastrous fate.

Through the incroachments of the sea in *Old Town Bay*, in consequence of the banks having long been in a most neglected and dilapidated state, great part of the adjacent cliff has been undermined and washed away;—part of the church-yard is even now in danger; and, unless timely measures of prevention are adopted, the waves may eventually demolish what winds and storms have so long spared.

It would be a great accommodation to the principal part of the Islanders if a new Church, of dimensions suited to the present population, were erected near *Hugh Town*; but there is scarcely any hope of this being effected, except through the liberality of the Lord Pro-

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\* It has, however, lately received some necessary repairs.

prietor, or of Government, after the Islands revert to the Crown. •

On the East side of the bay, near the Church, and about a mile from Hugh Town, is *Old Town*, which was formerly the chief place in the Island. It contains about two hundred inhabitants, principally fishermen, and others connected with the sea. Old Town Bay, as well as Porth Cressa, and the Eastern side of St. Mary's Pool, is full of spacious ledges of low rocks, which probably were once covered with land, but now exhibit a dreary appearance at low water, and are very dangerous at all times. Troutbeck observes that Old Town Bay "is both rocky and exposed to the Southern sea, so it is not convenient for ships to come into; but the pool is round, and the rocks and loose stones which now incumber it, might easily be removed, and make a jetty-head on each side of the entrance, which would be of great use to the pilots in strong Easterly winds, when they cannot get out to pilot ships from the other parts of this Island."

Between the Church and Old Town there is a good road, raised on the sand, and kept up by stones, in a curvilinear direction, tracing the head of the bay. But the ground from this place to Permellin Bay in St. Mary's Pool, (before described) is low and marshy,

and overgrown with reeds. This tract is called *the Lower Moors*, and abounds with wild-fowl in the winter season; but, for want of due care, it is liable to be overflowed at spring-tides; and, indeed, it is scarcely ever free from salt water. Yet the soil is very good; and, were those marshes properly cleared and drained, they would make valuable pasture land. A drain has been made for carrying off the water at Old Town, but scarce any attention is paid to keep it clear and open. Fine mullets and eels are caught here in the Summer.

On the North East side of Old Town, on an eminence chiefly composed of aggregated rocks, there was formerly a *Castle*, said to have been built by one of the Earls of Cornwall. This was certainly the castle described by Leland in the third volume of his *Itinerary* (page 7) where he says, "In it" (*i. e.* St. Mary's) "is a poor town and a meatly<sup>\*</sup> strong pile; but the roues<sup>\*</sup> of the buildings in it be sore defacid and worn." In Troutbeck's time—(for it seems to have wholly escaped the observation of Heath!)—some part of the walls remained, though the greater part of the materials had long before been carried away for the erection of the Star Castle." At pre-

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<sup>\*</sup> Moderately.

<sup>\*</sup> Rooms.

<sup>\*</sup> A. D. 1598.

sent, however, there is scarcely a vestige of this once formidable edifice;—the remainder of the walls, and many of the rocks, having been taken away to build the houses now standing at the foot of the hill, on its Eastern side. The natural blocks which still remain are yet denominated the Castle Rocks, and have somewhat of a picturesque appearance as they lean over the verdurous acclivity facing the West. The height of the hill may be about twenty yards from the moorlands at its base: The view from its summit is extensive and interesting; and the site was admirably chosen, as the castle commanded not only Old Town Bay, but the two bays of St. Mary's Pool,—the intermediate tract of low land,—and the sides of the adjacent hills.

From the proximity of the Church and Castle, it is evident that Old Town, at some distant date, was the chief place in the Island; though it is highly probable that even then its extent and population were much less than at present. Natural advantages are certainly in favour of Hugh Town, though the unskilfulness of its builders has been productive of danger to its inhabitants, as will be shewn hereafter.

The Eastern shore of Old Town Bay is a promontory, called the *Tolman*, or *Tolman Point*, from the singular position of some

rocks near its extremity. This promontory consists of three carns, or masses of rock, rising romantically amidst the surrounding fields. Towards the sea, the rocks are of immense size. The *Tolman*\* is a huge block, measuring about six feet each way, and lying, in an inclined position, on two other masses of rock, so as to form a covered passage. The rocks on which it rests on one side, have a very regular and uniform appearance, like a natural wall, being perfectly perpendicular: On the other side, though the surface of the rocks is even, the wall declines considerably from its base. The main rock, in fact, appears to have been cleft asunder to a con-

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\* *Tolman*, or rather, *Tol Mén*, is a Cornu-British word, signifying a *holed stone*; and, by analogy, a *covered rocky passage*. Dr. Borlase describes a *Tolmen* as "a large orbicular rock, supported by two stones, between which there is a passage; and from this circumstance," he adds, "it derives its name. There is a *Tolmen* in the village of *Mén*, in the parish of *Constantine*, (or *Constenton*) *Cornwall*, the passage of which is about three feet and a half in breadth, and the same height, but the top-stone is thirty three feet in length. The Doctor thinks that "the top-stones of these singular monuments were placed in their present position by human labour and art, after having been brought from some part of the carns with which they are still partially surrounded;" but I see no reason to be of the same opinion with regard to the *Tolmen* at *St. Mary's*.



siderable depth, (probably by some violent convulsion of nature) when,—the larger portion remaining firm,—the smaller part declined a little, following the declivity of the hill: Much of the aperture was probably filled up, in subsequent years, by earth and granitulous particles washed in from the adjacent hill, and hence the present *Tolmen*, or rocky passage; the length of which (though it is angular) is little more than five yards; the height, five feet at one end, and six feet at the other; and the breadth, two feet below, and three feet at top. The covered space, as before observed, is not above six feet; and I think it probable that the superincumbent mass was formerly a rocking-stone resting on that part which now forms the upright wall.—The rocks connected with this carn are very large, and mostly in square masses; and there is an immense number of rock-basons (or rather of alluvial dilapidations) on all the pile. On Tolman Point, as well as on Peninis, and, indeed, on several other headlands on this Island, are the platform and remains of a sod battery. These batteries were nearly all of the same size, mounting three or four guns each, but they have long been dismantled and suffered to fall into decay. My opinion on the best means of fortifying the Scilly Islands will be found annexed to the description of the Garrison, in the present Chapter.

To the East of Tolman point is a little rocky bay called *Porth Minnick* (or *Monach*), terminated by a point of land bearing the name of *Blue Carn*, but presenting nothing worth notice. The same may be said of *Church Ledge Bay*, which is immediately contiguous. The cliffs all around this part are crowned with grey carns; the shores are lined with brown rocks and stones of every variety of size; and the sea is studded with various masses of the same nature, rising in diverse yet chilling forms, under the various denominations of the *Gull rock*, the *Gilstone*, *Carrack Stern*, *Church Ledge*, and others, which have sometimes proved fatal to mariners, through their ignorance of the hydrography of the shores of Scilly. It is pleasing, however, to add, that no very serious instance of naval disaster has occurred here for several years.

Proceeding round the coast, in a North-Easterly direction, the next object is *Giant's Castle Bay*, which may be said to be cased with rocks. The bay derives its name from some stupendous rocks hanging over the cliffs of its Eastern shore, which, at a distance, have an appearance of being regularly piled, in terrific grandeur, over the deep that roars below. This tremendous crag is about a hundred feet high, declining suddenly towards the sea, but more gently on the land side;

from which, however, all communication was cut off by a narrow ditch and low rampart, crossing the promontory from bay to bay. Within this inclosure the natural eminence was strongly fortified by a thick stone wall, some remains of which are still heaped or scattered in various directions. This place could never have been distinguished for convenience; yet when nature and art were thus combined for its defence, it must have presented a most formidable aspect to its enemies. "It has the name of *Giant's Castle*," says Troutbeck, "because in these Islands, all extraordinary works are, by the common people, attributed to giants or the Devil. It was probably designed by the Danes as a retreat from the Saxons, in case they should be cut off from their ships; and certainly it must have been a place of great strength in those times, especially if they had plenty of provisions within it."\*

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\* One cannot help feeling displeased at the absurdity (to give it no worse name) of certain hydrographers, who, in laying down charts of these Islands, have exhibited Old Town Castle and Giant's Castle with walls and turrets standing, and flags flying, as if still existing in their pristine state of munition; whereas they are so completely demolished (and probably have been so for hundreds of years) that it requires no inconsiderable share of attention to trace any vestige of these long-ruinated piles.

Near the head of Giant's Castle Bay is a rock nearly ten feet in length, seven in breadth, and above five feet thick, reclining in a slanting direction on another rock, imbedded in the earth. This was formerly a *loggan* (or logging) *stone*,—called by some a *riding rock*. It was so nicely poised on the sharp edge of the rock which still supports it, that it could be put in motion by a child, six years of age, (or, as Troutbeck says, “with a man's little finger;”) and would continue its oscillatory vibrations in a very perceptible manner, for a considerable time after receiving this slight momentum; yet it was calculated that the exertions of a thousand men would be insufficient,—without the aid of machinery,—to remove it from its position. It was, however, thrown from its poize a few years since, by a number of soldiers then in garrison here; in compliance with the wanton orders of their officers, in order to decide a frivolous bet! Thus it appears that if the age of chivalry is gone by, that of the Vandals and Huns is not yet utterly past.

There are some other rocks between Peninis and this part of the Island which appear to have been loggan stones; but which, either by design or accident have been thrown from their pivots.

(It may also be here noticed, that near the South-Western extremity of Cornwall, on the

promontory called Castle Trereen, is a Danish fortification, formed, like Giant's Castle, by stupendous crags emerging to a great height from the sea, and by a triple entrenchment running across the neck of land. *There*, also, is an immense loggan-stone, the wonderful equilibrium of which is the just theme of general admiration to all who have the temerity to approach it, which cannot be done without danger, and hence, probably, its preservation. It reclines on an immense pile of rocks, immediately over the sea; contains about twelve hundred cubic feet; and is computed to weigh ninety tons: Yet this tremendous block can be made to rock to and fro for a considerable time by the application of the strength of one man!)

Some account of the purposes to which these rocks were applied by the juggling sleight of the Druids (who generally had a temple near those remarkable productions of nature) may not be unacceptable.

The trial by ordeal, in cases where guilt could not be substantiated by a number of witnesses, has ever been found to prevail in some form, amongst all ignorant and uncivilized tribes. The wager of battle—(so lately abolished in *England*!) was but a vestige of that common superstition that seems inherent in human nature in its unenlightened state,

and which led men to believe that Heaven would interfere by a miracle to rescue innocence accused. Of the fire-ordeal of the Saxons,—by which the culprit was enjoined to give proof of his innocence by walking blindfold and unhurt over hot bars of iron,—few are ignorant; and it is not to be doubted that many have gone through this trial, not only without injury, but to the most perfect conviction of the thoughtless multitude,—by a course of training similar to that which enables some in the present day to dance a hornpipe, blindfold, and wearing wooden shoes, amongst a number of eggs, irregularly disposed, yet without breaking any! It has been stated by some that the Druids worshipped certain rocks as deities, but to this opinion I can hardly assent. It is well known that they were professed astrologers, and that they worshipped the sun and moon, ( and, perhaps, most of “the host of Heaven”) and even this fact seems sufficient to exculpate men of their undoubted learning from the gross idolatry of “bowing down to stocks and stones.” They might, however, and probably did, inculcate that those rocks should be regarded with veneration which were in any wise used in the performance of their religious rites. The loggan stones with which both Cornwall and Scilly formerly abounded, must have afforded

them ample means to work on the credulity of the multitude, over whose mental as well as corporeal faculties they reigned with absolute sway. At one of these rugged altars they could, by the apparent fervency of their devotion, procure a seeming miraculous answer to their orisons before the eyes of assembled thousands. They could also, at their will, establish the innocence or guilt of whomsoever they might chuse to save or condemn, by permitting or restraining the oscillations of the incumbent mass, or by causing it to be touched in those directions whence it would receive a greater or less degree of motion. It is painful to reflect that such impositions have at any time been practised on the weakness and blindness of human nature; but this emotion will have but half its effect unless it be coupled with a feeling of the most ardent gratitude for the inestimable gifts of life and immortality which are brought to light by the Gospel.

Near Giant's Castle Bay, and under a heap of solid rocks, very difficult and dangerous of access, is a small cave, open towards the sea, called *Tom Butt's bed*. It derives its name from a lad who, in order to get rid of a hard master, and at the same time to avoid being pressed into the Navy, concealed himself here three days and three nights, in the reign of

Queen Anne. He was afterwards discovered by some boys who were accidentally in the neighbourhood with dogs, and who supplied him with food until he had an opportunity of shipping himself off in the merchant's service.

The tract of high land extending in a North-Easterly direction from the back of Old Town to Porth-Hellick, and in a North-Westerly direction from the Giant's Castle, inland; and measuring in each direction about half a mile, is called *Sallakee Downs*. On these downs are several burrows. One of these burrows stands on an eminence, called *Ward-Hill*, and is surrounded by two stone circles, the diameter of the innermost circle being ten feet, and that of the outermost, thirty-six feet. The flat stone, or rock, which covers this burrow, and which is about a foot thick, has a square perforation in the centre, supposed to have been for receiving a flag-staff in former times. At a little distance are the remains of a *Druidical temple*, consisting of nine large stones, or rocks, in an erect position, with several smaller stones, describing a circle on a floor of natural rock, and of a pretty even surface. Many of the stones belonging to this work have been carried away for building; yet the form and situation of those that remain,—the number of rock-basons on their tops,—and the



presence of a stone pillar (although now recumbent) in the centre, sufficiently demonstrate that this was no inconsiderable place of Druidical resort and superstition. On either side of this temple are several burrows.

And here it may be observed that wherever the remains of such temples have been found, a number of burrows has always been found near them; our ancestors, probably, having been influenced, in this respect, by feelings similar to those which cause us in the present day to inter the dead in the immediate vicinity of the Church. Thus, Stonehenge, which has been called the Cathedral of Druidism, is surrounded by burrows, covering the neighbouring downs to a considerable extent. That stupendous work, like all others of similar use, is situated not on the summit of a hill, but near it; and in the formation and direction of all those circles (notwithstanding the rudeness of the materials of which they are composed) there is a uniformity of design, which evidently shews the concurrence of their founders in opinion, and, perhaps, the maintenance of a strict correspondence between them. The mode of interment in burrows, was common not only to the Danes, Saxons, and Britons, but is noticed by some of the most ancient and authentic historians, particularly Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus, and Livy. Indeed, from

the appearances that have been observed by travellers on various parts of the earth, it is plain that nations of the most remote antiquity,—Romans, Greeks, Phœnicians, Persians, and Assyrians,—alike practised this mode of sepulture, which we also find mentioned in the earliest periods of Jewish history. Without pretending to determine precisely what race occupies the peaceful dormitories on these and the contiguous downs, I may be allowed to observe that the name Sallakee is evidently of Grecian origin;\* a circumstance which tends materially to strengthen the belief that these Islands were visited by the Greeks at a remote period.

Somewhat less than half a mile from Giant's Castle, in a North-Easterly direction, is the

\* Either from *σύλη*, *præda*, and *κίω*, *findo* (*Súlekao*)—to plow or dig for gain; or from *συλλοχάω* (*Sullochao*) *copias congrego*, to gather wealth;—names having reference to the mining operations here carried on.

Neither in the British, nor in any of the Teutonic dialects has the name Sallakee any signification; and Troutbeck and Heath, who troubled themselves but little about etymologies, spell the name indifferently, according to the modern corrupt pronunciation,—Sallakee or *Sally Key*!

*Quære:* After all that has been written on the general name of these Islands (see Chap. ii, Part I.) may not their modern appellation be derived from the above noun *σύλη*, *Sullee*, whence *Salley*, *Sully*, and afterwards *Scilly* from an error of the pen?

bay called *Porth Hellick*, distinguishable from the other inlets and creeks between itself and Old Town Bay, on account of its having a sandy beach at its head. The sand, however, is of a very large and rough quality, and much coarser than any besides which I have observed on the Islands. It seems in an early state of formation from the pounded granite stone. On either side of this bay are some large rocks; which, however, do not require a particular enumeration and description.

Porth Hellick, which is about a quarter of a mile in length, but not so broad, has a melancholy interest attached to it from its being the place where the body of Sir Cloudesley Shovel was thrown ashore.<sup>7</sup> It is related that he was found on a hatch of the ship, on which he had endeavoured to save himself, and that a little dog was by him when the body was discovered. He was buried in the sand by the soldier and his wife who first perceived him; but his body was afterwards taken up by the parser of His Majesty's ship *Arundel*, and conveyed to London, where it was interred with suitable honours. "A little pit in the sand," says Troutbeck, "upon Porth Hellick Bank, still shews where the soldier

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<sup>7</sup> See a full account of his shipwreck in Chap. ii, Part I.

and his wife buried Sir Cloudesley Shovel's body; the pit never fills up with sand, in the greatest storms, and what is remarkable, no grass ever grows upon it." This description does not exactly apply to the present appearance of the spot: The *pit* is now certainly filled with sand, to the level of the adjacent banks; but there is no sign of vegetation on the place, although all around is green! The naked spot, however, has no resemblance to a grave, but looks as if it had been an irregularly-scooped hole, nearly seven feet long, and in one part more than five feet wide.

At the head of Porth Hellick the waters of the *Higher Moors* discharge themselves into the sea.

To the North-East of Porth Hellick is another hill or down, of nearly the same dimensions as Sallakee. It is surrounded with rocks towards the sea, and is distinguished by a great number of carns, cromlechs, and burrows. This Place is by some called *Peter's Downs*. I caused a cromlech and a burrow to be opened here, to the depth of several feet, but found nothing but a greasy black earth, as if resulting from the decomposition of animal substances. From the softness of the mould I am of opinion that those repositories of the dead had been previously explored. The covering stone of the crom-

lech is placed at the East end of the grave, and supported by upright stones at each side, so as to form a passage about two feet in height. Two large flat stones, or rocks, are placed across the grave at the West end. The intermediate space (about three feet) is open, and from this place I had the earth cleared away, not being willing to have the stones removed. The length of the grave is twelve feet; the breadth, four feet and a half: The sides and bottom appeared to be lined with stone. The whole is surrounded by a burrow, or mound of earth, thirty yards in circumference, which is inclosed by large stones, closely laid. The whole must have been a work of great labour.

The dimensions of the burrow which I had opened, are still more extensive. The extreme circumference is sixty yards; the part circumscribed by stones measures forty yards round. The grave (which had a large flat rock lying across the middle) is nine feet long, and five broad.

The unfavourable state of the weather prevented the further prosecution of my researches at that time. I took, however, the dimensions of some of the smaller burrows, which had no covering stones, and found their general circumference twenty yards.

From Porth Hellick, the North-Eastern shore is diversified by a number of remarkably

large and singularly formed rocks, most of which, however, are distinguished by modern and not very appropriate denominations; as *Dick's Carn*, the *Clapper Rocks*, *Old Rock*, *Drum Rock*, &c. Behind the burrows which are first seen on entering the Downs from Porth Hellick, is a large spherical rock, above fifteen feet high, and about fifty in circumference, resting upon another, by a sub-face of not more than two feet broad. This is called the *Sun Rock*, the signification of which name may be gathered from what follows. Near this rock (which appears ready to slide from its poise and roll down the cliff to the immense masses that fortify the shore) is a small rock called *the Giant's Chair*. It is not above four feet high, and is scooped out in a manner very much resembling an old-fashioned elbow-chair, having a stone in front, like a footstool. It faces the East, and is conjectured, with much probability, to have been formed as a seat for the Arch-Druid of the Island to sit in and observe the rising of the sun. The scene around is solitary and impressive.

Pursuing the circuit of the Island, which now contracts, in a Northerly and North-Westerly direction, the view becomes improved by the appearance of some of the Eastern Islands lifting their rocky tops on

the surface of the blue liquid plain. Rocks, carns, burrows, and commons also diversify the scene on the land side. *Deep Point* is only remarkable as being the Easternmost extremity of the Island. An eminence, surrounded with rocks, called *Mount Toddin*, gives name to a little bay below it. Under the cliff is a cavern said to be of great extent, and which formerly was a considerable resort of smugglers. It is "called *Darrity's Hole*," says Troutbeck; but perhaps its proper appellation was more significant, being no more nor less than *Dirty Hole*! The shore around exhibits the ruins of different sod batteries and breast-works, thrown up at various times within the last two hundred years, but altogether undeserving of particular notice.

*Toll's Island*, which lies to the Northward of Mount Toddin, contains about seven acres of land.\* It is uncultivated, but affords a scanty pasture for sheep, and a shelter to rabbits. It is joined to St. Mary's by a sandy isthmus, which is overflowed at high water. There are some remains of batteries upon it, and it is a convenient place for making kelp. On either side of the isthmus is a pleasant, though small, sandy bay, which would be very

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\* Troutbeck egregiously errs in estimating it at *fifteen* acres!

convenient for bathing if not so frequently visited by the fishermen, to whom, especially during the prevalence of stormy weather, these bays afford a safe landing place.—*Toll Hill* is about a quarter of a mile, in a North-West-erly direction, from Toll's Island. It rises nearly fifty feet perpendicularly from the sea at high water mark, and was formerly crowned with a sod battery. The remains of some barracks, called *St. Mary's Walls*, are still to be seen under the South side of this hill.

The land inclosed by the coast before described, is very barren, and is denominated by Troutbeck, *Pellestree Downs*;“ on the North side of which is an inlet called *Water-Mill Bay*, from a mill, the ruins of which still remain. A small pier, called *New Quay*, is on the South side of this bay, and affords a convenient place of security for fishing boats. The North-West side of the bay is formed by an eminence called *Helveor Hill*, on which was a sod battery, with several salient angles, flanking each other,—commanding the en-

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“ Here, again we have evident traces of the ancient inhabitants of this Island. *Pellestree* is plainly a corruption of *Palæstra* (ab Παλαιστρα, *luctæ locus*)—a field of battle; but the names of the warriors, as well as the cause of their contests, have long been hidden beneath the veil of oblivion.



trance of Crow Sound. Near Helveor Hill are the ruins of an old Block-house.

About a quarter of a mile to the North-West, is an eminence covered with rocks, called *Inazigan Hill*; and at a little distance from the shore is an islet, surrounded by rocks, called *Inazigan*. Burrows, and the remains of batteries or breast-works, mark all this coast.

About a quarter of a mile from *Inazigan* is a prominence called *Sandy Bar*, which is the Northernmost point of St. Mary's. The land here declines rather precipitately towards the sea, and is overgrown with moss, fern, and furze, although the soil is good, and capable of high cultivation. Several hillocks of fine white sand line the base of the hill, and contrast their dazzling brightness with its sombre verdure. The sand, withdrawing from the sea on each side, stretches off in a Northerly direction from the land; and, by a very narrow isthmus, joins that extensive tract of sand called St. Martin's Flats. Over this isthmus (to which the name of *Sandy Bar* properly belongs) there is not more than four feet of water at the ebb of spring tides, although, at a little distance within, the water deepens to from one to two fathoms; and without, from two to three, four, five, ten, and twenty fathoms. The outermost, or Eastern side, of

Sandy Bar, is called *Crow Sound*: The inner side, (where the water progressively deepens to nine fathoms) is called *St. Mary's Roads*. The views of the different Islands, isles, and rocks, from the Northern to the Southern extremities of St. Mary's, are varied, picturesque, and highly gratifying.

To the North-West of Sandy Bar, are two rocks in the sea, called the *Little and Great Crow*; near which is a convenient quay and landing place, called *Penrithen*, where a number of boats, belonging to the inhabitants of this part of the Island, is generally moored, or hauled up under cover.—About a quarter of a mile inland from Penrithen Quay, on the brow of a hill, is a large upright stone, nearly ten feet in height, and visible at a considerable distance. It is supposed to have been an object of Druidical superstition, but perhaps was only intended as a mark for fishermen. It is denominated the *Long Rock*.

About a furlong to the Westward of Penrithen Quay is an eminence covered with rocks, called *Bant's Carn*. A quarter of a mile to the South-Westward of this is a reef of dun rocks called the *Crib, Creeb, or Greeb*;<sup>bb</sup>

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<sup>bb</sup> Quære: *Charib*, à *Χάρυβδις*, *Charybdis*? Here, if ever, it might justly be said of the unskilful mariner,

“*Cupiens vitare Scyllam, incidit in Charybdim.*”

and, about three furlongs further is *Carn Morval*, the Westernmost extremity of St. Mary's Island, (exclusive of the Hugh) and the North-Eastern point of St. Mary's Harbour; which has been already described. The land from Bant's Carn to Carn Morval is generally of a good quality—(the soil consisting of a clayey loam, extending to the depth of several feet)—and capable of great improvement. At present, much of it lies waste, under the denomination of *Hellengy downs*: These downs display the remains of a battery, some burrows, and two old tin-pits.

The interior of the Island, though of an aspect which may generally be termed agreeable, presents nothing entitled to a lengthened description. The roads are in some places very good; and a little attention and labour would make them all so, as the materials necessary for repairing them are near at hand. In many instances, good stone edges, and well-cultivated fields are observable;—in others, the fences, composed of stone and sod, are declining in every direction, or falling to the ground, through neglect, and large tracts of improvable land are suffered to lie waste, under the idea of commonage. This land,

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There is generally a considerable whirl, or eddy, around the *Crib* rocks.

however, is in many instances impoverished by the surface being dug up in turves for fuel.

The appearance of the different cots with which the interior of the Island is pretty plentifully sprinkled gives a pleasing addition to the general view. Troutbeck notices one or two places under the denomination of “small villages,” but this, in fact, is rather too high-sounding a name. They can scarce claim the appellation of hamlets, not more than three or four houses being ever found contiguous. The reader will perhaps smile on learning that one of these clusters boasts the name of *London*, and that another, of nearly equal importance, is called *Bristol*!

In a situation so isolated and so contracted, some circumstances may deserve mention, as peculiarities, which, in other places, would scarcely be noticed.—On walking across the Island, (which is here called “going into *the country*”!) in a direction from New Quay to Hugh Town, one spot in my route was pointed out to me as remarkable because I could neither perceive “house nor sea.”

The *name* of one place on this Island has generally made it an object of curiosity to strangers, I shall therefore notice it. I allude to *Holy Vale*, (which, I suppose, is the place intended in some ancient records by *La Val*, and styled a *town*!) It consists of three or

four good dwelling-houses, lying in a warm and well-sheltered valley, and surrounded by lands in a high state of cultivation. But—what renders it an object of peculiar interest to the lovers of ornamented nature,—it exhibits some very fine trees, chiefly of the elm and sycamore kinds, whose luxuriant foliage overshadows a short part of the road very agreeably. Here are also some fruitful orchards. Holy Vale lies open to Porth Hellick on the South, being distant about two miles from Hugh Town, with which it has a direct communication by an excellent road, from which many pleasant views may be obtained.

I know not whether this was ever the scite of a religious house,—(for the Islanders are generally as ill furnished with traditions as they are with records; and no light is derivable from the style of the architecture, the present houses having been only erected in the year 1751, in consequence of the destruction of the former buildings by fire:) Yet, from the name of the place itself,—from its conveniences of wood and water, so generally found near the habitation of monks;—and from the appellation of *Carn Friars*, or *Carn Prior*, still retained by a neighbouring hamlet and heap of rocks, the reader may probably conjecture that when Tresco had its abbey and resident canons, St. Mary's also had its monastery and religious orders.

At *Tremulithen*, *Longstone*, and *Newford*,—three respectable farms,—trees, orchards, and flowers are also to be found. These objects deserve a more especial notice as nothing of the kind is to be seen on either of the Off-Islands.

There are thirteen *wells* in different parts of St. Mary's, some of which are never dry. Yet much of the water is unfit for drinking, although it may be used for other purposes. *Carn Niegan Well*, and *Lenteverne Well*, "in the country," and one of the wells in the Garrison, afford the best water in the Island. The Lower Moors, however, abound with springs; from one of which,—near Porth Mellyn,—shipping are frequently supplied with water.

Having thus described the principal objects on what is called "the country-side" of the Island; the Garrison remains to be noticed.

The hill on which this line of defence is constructed, rises with a pretty steep acclivity from the sandy isthmus before noticed, to a height of about one hundred and ten feet above the level of the sea. Seen at a distance, it appears like an independant Island. It is somewhat steep on every side. This hill is called the *Hugh*; it is about three quarters of a mile in length, and a quarter of a mile in breadth: The circuit of the lines is one mile and a quarter. These lines extend

around the whole hill (*except* on the North West side, which is the most important!) and are about four feet and half high, within; and generally of that thickness. On the outside, of course, the height is greater, but is varied according to the irregularities of the ground.

The entrance is at the North East end, immediately above the pool. Over the archway is a stone with the initials "G. R. 1742. A. T." *A. T.* are intended to commemorate *Abraham Tovey*, a master gunner, under whose direction these works were constructed and improved, in the time of King George the Second; and who also distinguished himself as an able engineer in the projection and formation of several good roads in the Garrison; which, however, have long been much neglected, partaking of the general appearances of desolation so visible on most parts of the Islands.

Over the entrance of the Garrison is a bell, which is rung at six, nine, and twelve o'clock in the morning; and at three, six, and nine, in the evening, and struck at the termination of the intermediate hours. This bell is also rung to give notice of Divine Service on Sundays, although the Church is nearly a mile distant. —There is no public clock on either of the Islands.

Immediately within the Garrison are the guardhouse, storehouses, magazines, &c. In

front is the Castle: A road to the left leads to the officers' barracks, which are pleasantly situated, and command a view of the town, bays, and back part of the Island: Another road, diverging to the right, leads to the house of the master gunner, the barracks of the gunners, and those of the common soldiers.

The road to the Castle is broad, straight, and in good condition; about ninety yards long, and rising with a gentle ascent towards its extremity. The Castle, however, is a miserable building, and calculated, at first sight, to undeceive those who might have been led to expect something more magnificent from the names of *Stella Mariæ*, or the Star Castle, by which it is designated. It consists of eight salient angles, projecting twenty-four feet, in every point of which there is a watch-house, the roofs arising immediately from the walls. A platform, about seven feet in height, and as many in breadth, connects the whole of the interior, and this is surmounted by a wall or breast work, of nearly the same height, each angle of which is pierced with six loop-holes for musketry: There are, consequently, ninety-six such apertures in the whole building.<sup>cc</sup>

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<sup>cc</sup> Heath's view of this castle is surprizingly incorrect in many instances. Amongst other things, he has represented the walls of the castle and of the house as having



The height of the walls on the outside is about eighteen feet. Within is a dwelling-house, corresponding in shape with the castle, and consequently very incommodious. A passage, or foss, of about four feet in width, separates it from the platform. The rooms in this house are low, gloomy, and irregular. The height of the walls, from the base court, is about twenty one feet; one third of which lies below the platform; another third is hidden by the breast-work; and the remainder, with its cumbersome roof, peeps over the battlements. This was formerly the residence of the military commandant, but is now only occupied by an old serjeant and his wife. On the West side of the castle is a flag-staff, on which the King's colours are displayed on Sundays and rejoicing-days. The entrance to the castle is by a small stone-bridge, thrown over a dry ditch, through a tower composed of large stones, and affording the idea of ponderous imbecility. The tower is surmounted by a bell (never used) and over the entrance are the letters "E. R." (signifying *Elizabetha Regina*) and the date of its erection,—“1593.” The whole is surrounded by a miserable ditch, instead of a

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embrasures for cannon!—he has adorned the house with circular towers, and elevated the inner buildings far beyond their just altitude.

trench, and is fast falling into irretrievable ruin;—a circumstance the less to be lamented, as it never was a place of defence or convenience.

About two hundred yards to the South-West of the castle is a fine level plain, commanding an extensive view, especially of all the inhabited Islands. This plain, which is uncultivated, would make a good bowling-green, or cricket-ground, for the amusement of the gentry of the Island, if they delighted in such exercises. In the middle of the plain are the circular walls of two windmills, which have long been out of use. The tradition is, that they were built at the same time as the castle, in order to serve the islanders and others who might be obliged to take refuge in the garrison if the enemy should ever effect a descent on the Island. Troutbeck says they were suffered to go to ruin through a misunderstanding between the commanding officer and the islanders, the latter of whom wanted to obtain access to them at unseasonable hours. At present they have the appearance of obelisks, at a distance, and serve as marks to ships at sea.<sup>dd</sup>

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<sup>dd</sup> As a sign how little I have been indebted, in composing this work, to oral or written assistance, I may mention the following fact. About eighty yards to the

There are, in all, about eighteen batteries and bastions in the garrison, mounting from two to eight guns, and well calculated to protect the town and bays, and to dispute the passage of the Sounds. These are connected by curtains about fifty two yards in length, and each having an embrasure in the centre. The greatest number of guns that could be mounted on the present works, is a hundred and twenty; but were those batteries and lines completed, which have been marked out on the North-West side of the garrison, a considerable addition to this amount would be made. At present, the Western end of St. Mary's Roads is unprotected; most of the guns are dismounted, yet left to lie exposed to the injuries of the weather; and these circumstances, coupled with the absence of all the "pomp and circumstance" of military parade, and the recollection of unrepaired roads, and a dilapidated castle, necessarily beget feelings of dreariness and desolation.

"By the particular favour and bounty of

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Southward of one of those mills, and on the plain before mentioned, I discovered a neatly-made grave, covered with turf, and walled with small stones; yet, on enquiry, no person had observed it, or could give me the least information respecting it! I surmise it may have been the grave of a soldier, shot here for disobedience to military discipline.

the Duke of Leeds," says Troutbeck, after Heath, " the use of the castle, *which is square, roomy, and handsome,*" and all its apartments, with the harbour dues of shipping, have been enjoyed by the captain, or resident commanding officer of the company, commanding in his Grace's and the Lieutenant-Governor's absence, who never reside," being a considerable benefit. Besides the ships putting into Scilly from abroad, it sometimes happens that more than two hundred sail of coasting vessels are driven into these harbours, by an Easterly wind ; at which time, each ship or vessel pays, at an average, about two shillings and two-pence, for coming to an anchor, or laying upon the ground, and hoisting the King's colours. All foreign ships pay double, or four shillings

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" I would fain have avoided the insertion of this statement, out of regard to Mr. Troutbeck's taste, but the withholding a part of the paragraph might seem to involve me in the charge of making garbled extracts. It is but justice to Heath to say that the words printed in *italic* are not to be found in his work, but have been foisted in by his successor,—for what purpose I am at a loss to imagine. Certain it is that this " square, roomy, and handsome" edifice has not been occupied by any commanding officer for a great number of years!

" This is not now the case: The present Lieutenant Governor has resided at St. Mary's from the time of his receiving that appointment; as did Colonel Vigoureux, his predecessor, until the day of his death.

and four-pence, most of which comes to the commanding officer of the garrison, who is commander in chief, and chief magistrate in the Islands of Scilly. He has also the manuring and improving of all the garrison land, upwards of a hundred acres; the grazing of it with cattle; and the cutting and disposal of all the turf and furze for firing; and has likewise the sole management of all the coals and candles allowed for the use of the garrison, as well as stones for the purpose of building houses and fences." He further says, "the commanding officer has other conveniences, such as cellars, and out-apartments, belonging to the castle; with two spacious kitchen and flower gardens, defended by strong walls, at a little distance from the castle."

In concluding this account of the garrison, it only remains to be stated that, with the exception of about twenty acres, some part of which has been very recently inclosed and broken up, (and a few little patches of the *glacis*, cultivated by some poor families, for potatoes) the ground lies uncultivated, producing nothing but furze and fern, and a scanty pasture for sheep. It is certainly capable of great improvement, but the precarious tenure on which appointments are held here, is such, that no person would be justified, under existing circumstances, in expending the sums ne-

cessary to insure agricultural prosperity.—A great number of rabbits is found in almost every part of the garrison.

The most remarkable rocks by which the Hugh is distinguished, are, those around *Morning Point*, forming the Western extremity of Porth Cressa; *the Wool-pack*, with a remarkable carn of the same denomination, lying within the lines; *the Steval*, being the Westernmost extremity of St. Mary's, and formerly often fatal to ships; and the *Newman*. To which may be added *Rat Island*,—a heap of rocks, bearing a little grass, and lying in the Pool, immediately at the back of the quay, to which (or, rather, to the rock on which it is built) the Island is joined at low water. There was a sod-battery on Rat Island many years ago, but since the erection of the strong works in the garrison, which commands it, the battery has been suffered to fall into decay, being of little use. Leland, in his brief manner, notices this spot in the following words: "*Ratte Islande. Saynct Lydes Isle*, wheryn times past at her sepulchere was gret superstition."—Not the least vestige or resemblance of a "sepulchere" is now to be found on it.

It remains for me, lastly, to notice the *state of society* in St. Mary's, and to make such other observations as could not be well introduced in any preceding part of this chapter.

It has before been observed that St. Mary's is the seat of the civil and military government of the Islands. From this circumstance, as well as from its numerous advantages over the other Isles, it is the residence of all families holding any appointment at Scilly. Of these, however, there are not above twelve in all the different departments. In so small a circle, the means of amusement must necessarily be very few, and active spirits must too often feel that *tædium* which is one of the greatest miseries of human life to those whose sensibility renders them susceptible of its devastating powers. Here are neither literary, musical, nor gymnastic institutions; and but little opportunity can be found of exhilarating the spirits or improving the understanding. The general reading is confined to newspapers, which are pretty plentifully received here weekly, and interchanged amongst the owners.<sup>22</sup> Here are but few spots convenient

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<sup>22</sup> Since the above was written, a club was formed, called the St. Mary's Reading Society, the primary object of which was to procure the best literary and scientific periodical publications, and afterwards to add to their collection such standard works as might be thought desirable: The club consisted of about twelve members, each subscribing a guinea annually; but it is already declining! The author has also had the happiness to procure, for the use of the Clergy on these Islands, a

for bathing, the greater part of the Island being surrounded by rocks, and the sandy bays, besides being shallow, being too open to observation. Walking is the exercise chiefly followed: Sailing is but little practised except on the calls of duty. Water-parties very rarely occur. Angling may be followed with success round many of the rocky points by which the Island is studded; and, in winter time, those who are fond of shooting may find employment amongst the wild-fowl in the moors, or the rabbits in the garrison. Cards and *petits soupers* are the occasional concomitants of a winter's evening.

To what has been said in a preceding chapter, of the general amusements of the Islanders, the following may be added as peculiar to those of St. Mary's.

Early in the morning of May day—(or rather during the preceding night)—numbers of young persons of both sexes find *amusement* by “going into the country,” unhooking gates, injuring fences, or otherwise damaging the property or incommoding the convenience of the inhabi-

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select, though small, library of Divinity, from the Associates of the late Rev. Dr. Bray, of London, who have done him the honour to appoint him their Librarian on these Islands. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had a small library here for the use of their Missionaries, but most of the books have been lost.



tants. A may-pole, with garlands, is also set up, but is unhonoured by either music or dancing.<sup>hh</sup>—On the eves of the days of St. John the Baptist and St. Peter—(the hottest season of the year!) large bonfires are *appropriately* kindled in various parts, and a great many young people parade the streets with flaring torches, which they whirl about in every direction.<sup>ii</sup>—A kind of *Christmas play*, but of a very ridiculous description, is sometimes attempted by a party characteristically enough denominated *goose dancers*!<sup>kk</sup>—The barbarous custom of shooting at cocks tied to a stake for the purpose, is not utterly abolished in either of these Islands.

Education, here, is not in a very eminent state. The Duke of Leeds pays twelve pounds

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<sup>hh</sup> These *freaks* seem to be the tattered remains of some vestiges of the *furry dance* (or "*Floralia*!") commemorated in the same month at Helston.

<sup>ii</sup> This foolish custom, which would surely be "more honoured in the breach than the observance," is, I believe, confined to Scilly and Penzance. At the former place it threatens very dangerous consequences, many of the houses there being low, and covered with thatch.

<sup>kk</sup> Such is the name by which both Heath and Troutbeck distinguish them, and which prevails to the present day: But it has been suggested to me that *goose* or *geese* should be rendered *guise*,—from the French *deguiser*, "to disguise." The subject, however, is not worth the disquisition.

per annum for the instruction of some poor boys, who are taught in the Court House; and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge pays ten pounds to a school-mistress in Hugh Town, and eight pounds to another woman residing in the interior of the Island, for teaching poor children of both sexes: The Society also provides these schools with books; and the mistresses make some small addition to their incomes by receiving a few scholars at a trifling weekly sum. But it is in too many instances to be regretted that the neglect of parents in a great measure frustrates the ends of tuition, and that children are here suffered to exercise almost every rudeness with impunity.—There is a Wesleyan meeting-house (which the Islanders call a *preaching house*) in Hugh Town, and two or three smaller ones on different parts of the Island; belonging to Baptists, &c. The Methodist meeting has a small school attached to it.

The only established communication between Scilly and England is by two small packets, (the property of individuals) which generally sail from St. Mary's for Penzance, on Tuesdays, and return on the following Fridays. These vessels are each of about forty tons burden; sloop-rigged; and navigated by five or six hands. The time of sailing depends on the state of the tide, though it may

be materially affected by other circumstances connected with the weather. The sea in the Channel is commonly rough ; and it is thought " a good passage " which is performed in eight or nine hours. In some few instances, however, when the wind and tide have been peculiarly favourable, the passage has been made in less than five hours. In others, on the contrary, those vessels have been detained in the open sea from six and thirty to eight and forty hours, when the inconveniences to passengers, especially to females, in a crowded cabin and with scanty accommodations, must have been almost intolerable."

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" In former years, however, the passage was much worse. Troutbeck says, the inhabitants " want a constant and *even monthly* communication with England, for many reasons : . . . they have been several weeks without receiving any provision or intelligence from the main." But Heath's account was still more deplorable. " *These Islands,*" says he, " not being furnished with a decked vessel for crossing over those seas in rough weather, and one not being allowed by the Government for that purpose, a passage, depending so much on the weather, is seldom performed oftener than once in a month, or six weeks, in the summer ; but in the winter not so often. And as they" (i. e. the passages) " *are usually made in small open fisher-boats, amidst the running of several cross-tides, violently affected by sudden changes to bad weather, the passengers are forced to venture at the extreme hazard of their lives, when necessity or duty calls them.*" It is some con-

Here, then, appears a fit opportunity for the interference of Government, in providing some more desirable mode of conveyance for those whose business or pleasure induces them to visit Scilly. While every session of Parliament is productive of fresh enactments for widening and improving roads, repairing bridges, regulating the number of coach-passengers, and punishing instances of misconduct in the proprietors and drivers of wheeled vehicles of almost every description; why should individuals, whose less auspicious fate compels them to travel by water in these parts, be left to shift for themselves,—without distinction of age, sex, or condition,—in any conveyance which they may be able to procure? Notwithstanding the acknowledged skill and care of the persons navigating the present pac-

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solation to reflect that these cases of extreme danger are no longer known; although the recital forcibly recalls the recollection of those times when country gentlemen, about to undertake *the long and perilous journey to London*, first made their wills, and afterwards filled their holsters with pistols and their pockets with provisions, to defend and support them on the road; and when a new coach was advertised to run from York to London in the "*incredible*" space of *three days*! Great facilities and accommodations have since been found for almost all classes who have occasion to travel by land or by water; yet the admission of amelioration by no means supersedes the expediency of seeking perfection.

kets, it must be obvious that no great accommodation can be found in vessels of such small dimensions, with a cabin scarcely larger than a closet, and to which all sorts of passengers have indiscriminate access. It is desirable, therefore, that the Scilly packet should be equal in size and accommodations to those belonging to Guernsey and Jersey, and that a cutter should be provided for this purpose, in all respects fitted to brave the violence of the sea; to defray the expence of which, an increased rate on passage, freight, and postage, should be allowed.

The return of the packets is an object of great and general curiosity amongst the islanders; nor will this be wondered at when it is considered that this is the only means enjoyed of receiving goods and letters from England. From the Telegraph, the vessels are discovered as soon as they get out of Mount's Bay, and a small red flag is immediately hoisted to give notice to that effect, which is answered by a fragment of a pendant displayed from the Star Castle. In the evening, on the approach of the vessels to the shore, the quay and other proximate places are crowded by men, women, and children, all anxious to see strangers and hear news. On my first arrival at Scilly, the following lines of the facetious Peter Pindar, on the Margate hoy, struck me as forcibly applicable to the scene before me:

"Go, beauteous hoy! in safety ev'ry inch;—

"That storms should wreck thee, Heav'n forbid!

"Whether commanded by brave *Captain Finch*,

"Or,—equally tremendous—*Captain Kidd*!

"Soon as thou gett'st within the pier

"All Margate will be out, I trow;

"And people rush from far and near,

"As if thou hadst wild beasts to shew."

Another very important improvement to St. Mary's, would be the extension of the Pool, by carrying out the pier to Rat Island;—a situation so eligible, that it is surprizing how it could have been overlooked when the present quay was constructed. Rat Island is about fifty yards from the quay, in a Northerly direction from the garrison; and, being connected with the *Ray Rock*,—on which part of the pier is built,—by a fine rocky neck (dry at low water,) would, when thus improved, form a most valuable shelter to a great part of the Pool which is now exposed, as it would also be a most convenient spot for the erection of store-houses. From the nature of the soil, and the abundance of stone to be procured both at Rat Island, under the garrison, and by the demolition of a great part of the present pier, this useful work might be completed by capitalists at the sum of about two thousand pounds, which would return from ten to fifteen per cent interest on a rate

of a halfpenny per ton on all vessels putting into Scilly. This is one of the most simple, feasible, and easy improvements to which my attention has for some time been directed, and I do venture to indulge the hope that it will be carried into execution.

The present quay, which is about one hundred and thirty yards long, (although more than half of its length is above high-water mark inwards) was rebuilt by the late Earl of Godolphin, in the year 1751, on the site of the old quay, at an expence of eleven hundred pounds; but, for want of piles to prevent vessels from heaving against it by the force of the sea, the quay-head has been knocked away, and the quay itself has sustained much injury. With the exceptions before mentioned, it is a solid and well-compacted piece of building, affording shelter to vessels of one hundred and fifty tons burthen, lying either alongside, or on the strand.

Lastly, but not of least importance amongst the improvements of St. Mary's must be mentioned the repair of the sea-banks, particularly at Porth Cressa and Old Town. At the latter place, the encroachments of the sea are too painfully visible: The banks have been suffered to lie in ruin for a great number of years: Several yards in depth of the cliff have been washed away, and the lower part of the

Church-yard is almost daily threatened with the same fate.—By the irruption of the ocean from Porth Cressa over the low sandy isthmus before noticed, Hugh Town has been repeatedly inundated, and will, in the end, be probably swept away, unless proper measures are speedily taken to avert so direful a catastrophe.

“By the low situation of this town,” says Heath, “or the ill contrivance of those that built it, being almost level with every high tide, the water comes into some of the dwellers’ yards, and houses. The Town, as it is at present situated, is subject to be destroyed by inundation of the sea; which, if it should happen in the night, the people are also liable to be drowned in their beds. For, on Sept. 26, 1744, in the afternoon, it being a very high tide, the sea rolled in vast mountains, driven by the winds, and broke over the banks of *Perocressa*, next the Southward, where it entered the town with such violence and rapidity, as threatened the levelling of all the houses. One of the torrents, passing directly over the isthmus to the Pool, took a house away there as it went; other parts of it went through the steward’s former house, which it partly destroyed, filling the rooms and carrying away the furniture with it: A third torrent beyond this came down and joined it, passing



both together through the streets of the town with great fury to the opposite sea; also carrying away furniture, and filling the rooms of the houses. The damages done to some, at that time, were very considerable. If it had happened in the night time, as it did in the afternoon, when several inhabitants were obliged to quit their houses at the upper windows, and fly for refuge, it is reasonably supposed, that those who now escaped would have been drowned people. Most of the inhabitants were drawn out of their houses, before the flood began, by a curiosity to behold the prospect of the sea, appearing as if it was going to overwhelm the whole town; but they were forced to fly before its fury, as it suddenly passed over its bounds, near which, among the rest," says he, "I happened to be present. At this time great stones were thrown by the sea into some houses standing next it, in different parts of the Island; the walls of some houses were beat down, and the dwellers therein had but just time to escape with their lives out of the windows before it. Most of the low-land was overflowed, and some of the stone hedges levelled." Heath also states that both Old Town and Church Town received great damage by the inundation before mentioned.

In the year 1755, when the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, the shock of

that awful occurrence was distinctly felt at Scilly. A noise, as of distant thunder, was heard;—a tremulous motion was perceived in several parts of the Islands; and, although it was then low water, the tide rushed suddenly in, to the height of several feet: It withdrew with the same impetuosity; and, in the space of a minute and a half, again returned and retired with the same violence; after which it began to flow regularly at its usual hour.—The air, during this time, was perfectly calm.

But,—to return to the subject of inundations,—Troutbeck mentions that, on the 7th of December, 1771, there happened to be a high tide, when the sea broke in from Porth Cressa, and filled the town; which, nevertheless, did not suffer materially by this irruption. The violence of the storm, however, caused the crew of a West-Indiaman, then lying in St. Mary's Roads, to cut away her masts, to prevent foundering.

I believe it was in consequence of this overflow that fences, or sea-banks, were erected by the then Agent of Lord Godolphin. But, either through defect in the materials then used, or through neglect of subsequent repairs, these fences soon became dilapidated, and scarcely any of their ruins are now to be seen.

In January, 1817, another deluge took

place, which, though happily unattended with the loss of lives, was productive of great alarm, and did much damage to the houses and furniture of many individuals: The providential shifting of the wind, alone saved the town from destruction.—Several fish were left on the Parade, on the recess of the tide.

So lately as the 22nd of October, 1820, another dreadful storm took place; and, at high water (spring tide) the scene was awfully distressing. The wind blew with resistless violence; several houses shook dreadfully; the spray flew in showers over the highest points of land; the sea was within a foot of the level of the town, and actually entered several dwelling-houses, courtlages, and store-houses. Had the wind blown in a Southerly instead of a Westerly direction the town would inevitably have been overflowed. Much injury was done to the shipping and small craft at that time. His Majesty's brig Shamrock, then lying at Tresco, was obliged to cut away both her masts; several vessels parted their cables; a large American ship dragged her anchors and was stranded (after cutting away her foremast) near the Crow Rock; and a fine sloop of about twenty tons, was dashed to pieces on the Eastern side of St. Mary's Harbour. Of these things I was an ocular witness.

In consequence of the late irruption of the waters, and the continual apprehensions entertained of a similar visitation, attended, perhaps with circumstances of a more disastrous nature than have yet been experienced; a subscription has recently been set on foot amongst a few of the principal inhabitants of that part of the town which is more immediately exposed to danger from the sea, and some protection may be afforded by the plan adopted; which is, to bring together such a quantity of large stones on the beach, just above high-water mark, as shall not only increase the height of the bank, but also, by compression, consolidate the sand beneath it, in such a manner as to prevent its shifting before a heavy sea, and thereby opening a passage to the waters.—The aid of Government, or of the Lord Proprietor, is, however, necessary to insure the preservation of the town, as well as of the Church, the exposed and dangerous situation of which has been noticed before.

It may, however, be proper to remark, that in order to produce an extensive inundation, the combination of several circumstances is necessary: These are, the highest spring-tide, at the exact time of the moon being full; stormy weather, or much rain; and a strong Southerly wind,—Porth Cressa being particularly exposed on that quarter. Such a concurrence of elemental hostility is but sel-

dom known; and hence, rather than to any human foresight or exertions, have the inhabitants of Hugh Town been hitherto preserved. It should also be observed that the rocks in and around Porth Cressa, how offensive soever to the eye, are of signal use in breaking the force of the waves as they roll into the bay, and thus protecting the sands from their violence. On the other hand, what has been may be; or, a greater storm than has yet been experienced here, may accomplish what preceding visitations only threatened. When the Scilly Islands shall be regarded with an interest commensurate to their importance, it may be hoped that this momentous subject will not be overlooked. However, unless some efficient measures be speedily adopted, the next generation may contemplate at St. Mary's what have so long been objects of curiosity amidst the Off-islands;—the formation of more islets by the separation of the land;—houses buried in the sand; and the water flowing, in confessed and indisputable sovereignty, over the subjected shore.<sup>mm</sup>

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<sup>mm</sup> Of the only means, under Heaven, by which these effects can be prevented,—namely by the construction of *dykes* and *marshes*, the curious reader may find some interesting particulars in the account of the alluvial land of the Danish Islands in the Baltic and on the coast of Sleswick. See Professor Jameson's *Notes to Cuvier's Theory of the Earth*. 3rd edit. pp. 202—217.

# S U P P L E M E N T

TO

## CHAPTER I.

### THE EASTERN ISLANDS.

*Situation, Number, and Names of the Eastern Islands.—Compared with the larger Isles of Scilly.—Description of the Appearance and Curiosities of the most remarkable of these Islands.—Norenuer.—Singular Circumstance observable in the Channel betwixt this and the adjacent Island.—Ganilly.—Minewithen.—Great and Little Arthur.—Ragged Island.—Ledges and Rocks.—Observations.*

ON the North-East side of St. Mary's, and on the South-East of St. Martin's, and about half way between those two Islands, lies a little Archipelago called THE EASTERN ISLANDS. They are ten in number, and are situate immediately at the entrance of St. Mary's Road. The two innermost, which lie in a line, North and South, are called *Great Gannick* and *Little Gannick*. The two next, which lie in a line North-West and South-

East, are called *Great* and *Little Arthur*; but these are joined, and form but one Island, at low water. The other six (which are reducible to no line) are *Great Ganhilly*, *Little Ganhilly*, *Norenuer*, *Ragged Island*, *Mena-withen*, and *Innisvouls*. The two latter lie in a line (due North and South) with a large rock called *Hinjake* or *Hangjack*, and form the Eastern boundary of Scilly.

The space between the South side of these Islets and the North Eastern side of St. Mary's, is called *Crow Sound*, which is the Eastern entrance into St. Mary's Road. This Sound is about a mile in breadth.

The dimensions of the Islets, respectively, have been mentioned in a former part of this work.<sup>an</sup> Their united measurement is not much more than one hundred and twenty acres.

Diminutive as these Islands are, and, apparently, destitute of the means of affording the most common and necessary articles of food, some of them appear to have been formerly inhabited! On *Great Arthur*, which may be called the *St. Mary's* of this Archipelago, are not only burrows, but the remains of inclosures.<sup>oo</sup> It may also be noticed that

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<sup>an</sup> Chap. i. Part I. pages 5 and 6.

<sup>oo</sup> Having ventured this comparison—(“*sic parvis componere magna solebam*”) it may be observed, by referring

there is a spring of fresh water on *Great Ganilly*, though now much choked by sand, and for want of due attention in clearing it. Even at present, in Summer time, a few people take up their abode here for many weeks in a temporary hut, for the purpose of cutting seaweed, for kelp, from the rocks around. The appearance of the wreaths of smoke rising amidst the dun verdure and hoary cars of these petty isles, is pleasing and picturesque.

I shall briefly describe the appearance and peculiarities of the Islands as they are seen in approaching from St. Martin's.

*Norenuer*, called by some, *Little Crow Island*, is in form of an irregular obtuse cone. Its sides are covered with that mossy verdure so common to all the Islands in their uncultivated state, at the termination of which, near the sea, is a kind of wild grass, very long, and

to the map, that the whole cluster of the Eastern Islands has some resemblance, in shape and position, to the *Insulæ Magnæ*! If *Great Arthur* be taken for ST. MARY'S, *Little Arthur* will stand for TRESKO: *Great Ganilly* will represent ST. MARTIN'S, and *Norenuer* the *White Island* on its North side. BRYHER and SAMSON will find no unfaithful likenesses in *Great* and *Little Gannick*; but I am sorry that I can find no better substitute for ST. AGNES than the *Biggal* and its surrounding rocks! *Innisvouts*, *Little Ganilly*, *Ragged Island*, and *Minawithen*, will remain as they have long been,—the *Eastern Islands*!



of a rush-like appearance. There are several romantic carns, on the summit of the hill, and almost perpendicular on the sea side, to which they descend. Sand and stones skirt the base of the Island, which is very remarkable for being surrounded with *flat* rocks, of great breadth, running into the sea in regular strata, and extending to Ganilly in such perfection that the bed of the channel between these two Islands, (which can clearly be discerned through the transparency of the water) looks as if it had been paved!

*Great Ganilly*, as approached from Norener, has a regular and pleasing appearance. It is nearly level on top, expanding gradually towards the base. The shore is skirted by dark rocks for nearly one half its extent, and by light-coloured stones on the other. Above this is a level plain, from which the main hill rises abruptly, and with a fatiguing ascent. Its sides are sprinkled with grey granite masses, and at the extremity of its summit, on the right, is a large burrow, forming a conical hillock.

On the South Eastern side of the Island are the remains of several hedges, and the soil appears to be very good. There is a singular kind of wall of lofty rocks, running along this part of the Island, which has evidently been much shaken by storms. Several of the rocks

appear as if in the act of falling, and most of them are indented by numerous natural excavations. The hills are covered with particles of granite; and there is much sand, of a fine quality, on the shore, where there are some pleasant bays, very convenient for bathing. This Island is about six hundred yards long, from North-West to South-East.

The outline of *Minewithen* resembles the posture of a lion *couchant*. That part which would represent the head of that animal, is composed of solid rocks, divided by a wide and black chasm, extending from the bottom nearly to the top, but not very deep inwards. The rocks are precipitous and bluff, and the water is very deep and dark, even close in to the shore. The land is high; very difficult of ascent; and covered with long wild grass, growing in large tufts, which, if burnt, might be made good dressing.

*Great Arthur* is remarkable for having the best landing place in all Scilly! consisting of a fine sandy beach, gently sloping, and guarded on each side by smooth rocks, stretching to a small distance in the sea and forming a complete bason. On a very commanding eminence on this Island, is a cromlech and sepulchral cave, in very good order. The walls of this cave consist of large flat stones, laid with their edges smooth; and there are

two very large stones laid flat at the head of the grave, which appears to have been opened. It is about twelve feet long, four feet deep, and five feet and a half wide; and is surrounded by an artificial mound, about forty yards in circumference: At a little distance are two other burrows.

The hills on this Island are high, but small, and are connected by a ridge of rocks, running along the summit of the whole. Many of those rocks are strangely defaced by the weather. The soil, on the side of the hills, is good, and the remains of ancient hedges, and other vestiges of cultivation, are very visible.

*Little Arthur*, which is very flat, has also three ancient burial-places; one of which is large and square, like a family-vault.

*Ragged Island* is well named: It is a mere cluster of black, irregular, and dreary rocks.

The other Islands have nothing in them deserving particular notice.

Various ledges and clusters of rocks lie between the Eastern Islands and St. Martin's; particularly *the Hatts*, *the Damascenes*, and *the English Ledge*. This channel, or sound, is therefore dangerous, and only fit for small vessels.

Between Norenuer and Hinjake is *Mould Ledge*, which always presents three pointed

rocks considerably above the surface of the water.

Formidable as this enumeration of rocks and dangers may appear, it is, nevertheless, pleasing to reflect, that no instances are recorded or remembered of their having proved disastrous to life or property. The greater part of the wrecks for which Scilly has acquired an unhappy celebrity, has been confined to the Western Rocks, off St. Agnes; and even there they have generally happened through the unskilfulness of navigators, in not keeping their due parallel of latitude and attending to the Westerly variation of the compass. But on this subject the reader will find sufficient observations in a former part of this work.<sup>PP</sup>

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<sup>PP</sup> See Part I. chap. i, p. 2, *note*; also the conclusion of chap. ii. of the same Part.

## CHAPTER II.

## ST. MARTIN'S ISLAND.

*Position, Dimensions, and Population of the Island.—Observations on its former State.—St Martin's Flats, and Rocks.—Cruther's Hill.—Higher Town and Bay.—Church.—Various Rocks, Points, and Headlands, described.—Pope's Hole.—St. Martin's Head, and Day-Mark.—The Seven Stones.—St. Martin's Bay.—Culver Hole.—Extraordinary Changes on the Surface of the Island.—WHITE ISLAND, and Cavern.—Remarkable Rocks and Carns.—Lower Town and Middle Town.—School.—Singular Account of a Fish.—TEAN ISLAND.—ST. HELEN'S.—NORTHWITHEL.—St. Helen's Pool.—Various Rocks described.*

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**O**N the North-North-East side of St. Mary's, from the nearest point of which it is distant about two miles, (but, from the Pool, four) lies the Island of ST. MARTIN'S.\* Its length, from

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\* Although St. Martin's is not equal in size or importance to Tresco, it is here described first, in order to

East-South-East to West-North-West, is nearly two miles; and its circuit, six miles. It is narrower in the middle than at its extremities, but its average breadth is three quarters of a mile. It contains seven hundred and twenty acres, sixty houses, and two hundred and eighty inhabitants, chiefly pilots and fishermen. The houses are divided into *Higher Town*, situate on the hill above the bay on the South-East side of the Island;—*Middle Town*, the name of which declares its situation, although it does not express its state, which is, five or six cottages exhibiting the most deplorable picture of wretchedness;—and *Lower Town*, situate near the point of land next to Teän Island.

This Island probably derived its present name from the monks during their stay at Tresco. No clue exists to guide to its ancient denomination. The names of the most remarkable rocks and places in and near it, are either British, or of still more modern derivation.

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enable the reader to sweep the circuit of Scilly in the order in which the Islands present themselves to the view at St. Mary's. By referring to the map, or general representation of the off-islands as seen from the garrison at the former place, the utility of this order will be sufficiently apparent.

Troutbeck (whose work was printed in 1794) says, that "about one hundred and sixty years ago," St. Martin's, "had not one inhabitant;" and again,—“about a century ago there were not above three or four families upon this Island.” When his book was published, the population consisted of “upwards of thirty families, and about one hundred and eighty inhabitants, who” were “all related to each other.” At present there are more than fifty families on the Island; and, by what means soever it was recently depopulated, it is plain that it must formerly have been fully inhabited; which is evident both from the number of its burrows, and the great quantity of human bones found, not only on digging the cemetery, but in two high banks of sand, near Lower Town. It is very remarkable that, though those banks were above twenty feet high, yet, on the sand being shifted by the sea, many years since, a great number of graves, of various sizes, became apparent; the dimensions of each grave being accurately marked by stones set up, in an upright position, in form of a coffin, and their uniform longitude being East and West.

It is probable that St. Martin's was fully cultivated in former times, as the remains of old hedges are to be seen on either side of the ridge which runs along the middle of the

Island, as also on the high land between the principal town and the day-mark. At present, however, the greater part of it lies waste, and only affording commonage for cattle. In many places the soil has been buried by the vast accumulations of sand blown up from the sea shore. What is cultivated, however, affords good pasture, as well as plentiful crops of corn and potatoes; and much more might be brought into tillage by skill and perseverance.

*St. Martin's Flats* are large sand banks, nearly twice the dimensions of the whole Island; their extreme length, from North-East to South-West, (where they join the Sandy Bar, at St. Mary's) being about two miles; and their average breadth, from West-North-West to East-South-East, one mile and a quarter. They are dry—(with the exception, perhaps, of a few shallow pools)—at low water, spring tides; when not only Tresco and St. Mary's, but even the Eastern Islands, seem attainable by this sandy plain; and I have even heard of some who have actually walked across to the two former places, never finding the water to reach higher than their knees. The attempt, however, must be very dangerous, owing to the looseness and consequent instability of the sand.

About midway between St. Mary's and St. Martin's is an extensive ledge, supporting a



large rock, called the *Gouthers*. On the South-West side of St Martin's is a lofty promontory, called *Cruther's Hill*, about one hundred and twenty feet high. This is, perhaps, the most remarkable spot on the Island. The sides of the Hill are very steep; and fern, moss, and a coarse, rank grass, luxuriate around it. But, from its summit to its base, on either side, it is thickly strewn with immense masses of granite; some so lightly reclining on other blocks, that they appear every instant about to roll from the spot on which they have been so wonderfully thrown. On the top of this hill are three large and high burrows, surrounded and covered with rocks, lying in a direct line North and South, at an interval of about sixty yards from each other. In consequence of these three protuberances, the intermediate space has a very ridgy appearance. The top stones of one of those burrows having been removed, this ancient place of sepulture lies open, and discovers a grave of immense size. It is regularly formed of mason's work, at the sides, head, and bottom. It is shaped like a coffin, but its length is fourteen feet; its breadth four, and its depth three. The huge rocks around it add much to the wild solemnity of the scene.

There is a rude *quay* on the East side of Cruther's Hill, and a small pier on the West;

but both these places are dangerous for landing, (as indeed, are most of those in the Off-Islands) on account of the number of rocks and large stones,—many of them peaked, and rendered slippery by being over-grown with ore-weed,—over which it is necessary to scramble before reaching the land. The Islanders, accustomed to those rude landing-places, are too indolent to endeavour to improve them, but to persons unused to such ways, they must needs be extremely unpleasant; and this excites a feeling of dissatisfaction, that the facilities afforded by nature for the construction of safe and commodious quays, have not been improved; and that some of the numerous blocks which now impede a landing, have not been employed by human industry so as to favour it, and to protect the boats of the Islanders.—The shallowness of the water on the Flats, at ebb-tide, prevents even small boats from reaching the shore at such times.

On the hill to the East of Cruthers is *Higher Town*; behind which is St. Martin's Church. The town consists of about forty-six houses, for the most part standing in rows of three or four each, and generally facing the bay or the road. These houses are all built of stone, and two stories high, but chiefly covered with thatch.—A good, though narrow road, leads

to the town from the pier on either side of Cruther's Hill.

From the top of the hill on which Higher Town is situated, down to the sandy beach that skirts the shore, the greater part of the ground is divided into small inclosures, and cultivated. Beheld from the water, on a fine day, this view is pleasing. The pellucidness of the sea, through which the sand, rocks, and weeds at the bottom, are distinctly visible ;—the spacious bay, with its broad, sabulous, glittering strand ;—the boats of varied size, construction, and colour, lying near the Preventive Boat house,—along the beach,—or gently riding on the waves ;—the varied hues of cultivation adorning the steep acclivity of the shore ;—the whited walls of many of the dwellings by which the whole is overtopped ;—the rocky chaos on Cruther's Hill, to the left :—the bold cliff, and fresh green ocean stretching to the extent of the horizon, on the right ; altogether form a picture which may be contemplated with much interest.

*The Church* is described by Troutbeck as “a decent structure, handsomely seated,” but I question if ever those terms could, with strict justice, be applied to it. That writer also states that “a gentleman of *Dartmouth* contributed liberally towards the expence of lengthening the Church, and raising the roof

higher, which was formerly low, and covered with thatch. The side wall," he adds, "was then only seven feet high, and twenty feet long. The door was then in the West end; but since it has been altered, the door is in the South side, near the West end. The roof was raised five feet, and is now covered with pantiles. The Church is now thirty feet in length within, and fourteen in breadth, and has one bell, about half a hundred weight."

Such was the state of this building in Troutbeck's time. Before that, with its dwarf walls and straw roof, it must have been diminutive and miserable indeed. Heath, who does not appear to have concerned himself much about ecclesiastical affairs, in his brief account of St. Martin's (included in the compass of half a page!) does not even notice its Church, although, in another place, he says, "the four Off-Island teachers, who are fishermen, are appointed by the Agent to read prayers, and preach in their respective Churches (of Tresco, Bryer, St. Martin's, and St. Agnes) according to the doctrine of the Church of England. They are men," says he, "chosen for their exemplary morals, and are no ill grace to the pulpit."—(Here it may be observed, *en passant*, that none of the Off-Island Churches *had a pulpit* in Heath's time;—even a few months since, three out of the four, had only reading-

desks! )—" Their reward," he adds, " is their reputation, in which they endeavour to excel ; and they practise goodness for esteem. What is farther remarkable of these *Off-Island Clergy* [ is, that ] they take no surplice-fees, nor require any." Of these two paragraphs, neither is correct ; and the latter seems to convey an illiberal insinuation, which should be explained :—The clerks of the different *Off-Islands* receive yearly the sum of twenty shillings from the Duke of Leeds, and as much from the inhabitants of the respective Islands to which they belong. " Surplice-Fees," of course, they had no right to " take," as they performed no duties on which fees are chargeable ; but on marriages and christenings they have generally received a small present from the parties most interested. The surplice-fees of all the Islands are paid to the Duke's chaplain at St. Mary's.

There are no records extant to shew when St. Martin's Church was originally built ; but, from the great number of bones found in its cemetery, it is probable that it has been used as a place of sepulture for some centuries.

Perhaps the following particulars, relative to the present state of the Church, may not be unacceptable to the friends of religion, especially to those of the national Establishment.

On my arrival at Scilly (in the month of June, 1820) as missionary to the Islands of St. Martin's and St. Agnes, I found the Church of the former in a state little short of ruinous. The walls without were overgrown with tufts of grass; within they were damp and mildewed. The roof was cracked in many places, admitting the rain freely; and many of the beams and rafters were so decayed as to crumble away when rubbed between the finger and thumb! The floor (which was of lime-ash) was much broken; and the pews were so crazy and worm-eaten as to be falling to pieces. There was no altar, no font, no pulpit, no tower;—scarcely, indeed was there any thing, either external or internal, denoting the House of Prayer. A small sun-dial, fixed on a rude stone pillar in the church-yard—(the more remarkable as being the only one of the kind, so applied, in any of the Islands) alone denoted the hours of service. The Church was much too small to accommodate the increased population of the Island, and the people were too poor to contribute any thing, but their manual labour during the winter-months, to its improvement. I applied, therefore, on their behalf, to that excellent Institution, the Society for Promoting the Enlargement and Building of Churches and Chapels; and I feel happy in having this pub-

lic opportunity of testifying the kind and prompt attention which my application and subsequent communications experienced. The Society made the liberal grant of Two Hundred Pounds towards enlarging the building; and that desirable work, which was begun about the end of January, 1821, was completed within less than four months; parties of the Islanders attending daily and gratuitously to raise and carry stones and clay, (which were found in great abundance near the Church) and otherwise to assist the workmen.<sup>b</sup> The building (which, with the exception of the West end, and a part of the side walls, is altogether new) has been extended to the length of sixty feet; the walls have been raised a foot and a half; and the sand, which had long been accumulating around them, having been removed to that depth, the apparent additional height is three feet,—the whole being fifteen feet clear. The roof, with its little garret-like windows, has been removed, and replaced by a substantial frame work, covered with slate, and having small sky-lights. The door has been placed in its former and most eligible station, at the West

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<sup>b</sup> The value of the *labour* of the islanders on this work (estimated at the rate of eighteen pence *per diem*, each man) was above *ninety pounds*.

end. A large gothic window, with lead sashes, ornaments the Eastern extremity of the Church, where a plain and suitable altar has been erected. The burying-ground,—which was formerly a mere croft, surrounded (but not defended) by a low, tottering hedge,—has been extended every way, nearly ten yards from the Church, and inclosed by a wall, about four feet and a half high; having a small iron gate, instead of a rude stone stile, at its entrance; and a plain cupola, supported by four stone pillars, and surmounted by a ball, weather-cock, &c. adorns the West end. The Church was re-opened for public worship on Sunday the third day of June.—A small tablet fixed against the wall, over *the Duke's Seat*, records the means by which those desirable improvements were accomplished.

At the Eastern extremity of Higher Town Bay, and opposite the English Ledge (before noticed) is a round hill called *English Island Point*; which is crowned by a small cairn, and distinguished by an ancient grave and a little circle of stones.

From English Island Point to St. Martin's Head,—(a distance, from South to North, of about three quarters of a mile)—the shore is indented in a number of bays and creeks: The rocks, in many places, especially on and near the headlands, are piled, almost per-



pendicularly, to a great height; and the land, —which is some of the highest in Scilly,—is extremely precipitous. Between the different points, or headlands, the ground is scooped into several large amphitheatres. The edges of the cliffs, along the greater part of this coast cannot be approached without danger of giddiness.

Off this coast are various high rocks and broad ledges; particularly *Chimney Rock*, *Chapel Rock*, and that extensive cluster called *Hard Lewis*: Yet the interfluent water is so deep, that small vessels may safely come between these rocks and the shore, if they be provided with skilful pilots.

On the shore nearly opposite *Chimney Rock*, is a remarkable pile of rocks called *Carn Levereth*. It is nearly a hundred feet high, and so smooth towards the sea, as to present the appearance of the walls of a castle; the effect of which is heightened by a small platform of natural rock (twelve feet broad, and sixteen feet long) lying at its base.

“About a hundred yards further North” says Troutbeck, “is a ‘*subterraneous*’ cavern, called the Pope’s Hole, about fifty fathoms under the ground, into which the sea flows, so called from a sort of a bird which roosts in it by night, above ninety feet high above the level of the water.”!! I confess I had some

difficulty to understand this passage. On personal inspection and enquiry, however, I found the place alluded to, which is situated at the head of a small creek; the shores of which are stiff, rocky, and dangerous. The cliff is about eighty feet high, and the aperture,—which is shaped like a regular and finely-pointed gothic arch, is about fifty feet high in the middle, and near twenty feet wide. The land above, and on each side of the cliff, is high and precipitous; the water around is deep and dark. Of the extent of this natural passage, into which the sea has at all times a free ingress, I can say nothing, as I never visited it in a boat; nor could I find any one who had ever explored it.—It derives its name from its being a place of shelter to some puffins, *vulgo* “ popes.”

*St. Martin's Head* is a bold point of rocks rising abruptly from the sea, and guarding the North-Eastern promontory of the Island, the height of which is about one hundred and sixty feet. This point is rendered still more conspicuous by a *Day-Mark*, erected on an apparently-artificial mound of earth. The *Day-Mark* is a round tower, twenty feet high, surmounted by a conic top, of nearly the same height; and, the whole being plastered, and frequently white-washed, is well adapted to answer the purpose of its erection, being

visible at a distance of many leagues. The tower is built of stone, and within it there is a very narrow flight of steps, leading to a floor, whence, through some small square apertures in the wall, the Land's End, and the whole of the Scilly Islands, may be seen. A stone over the door-way bears the initials "T. E." and the date of the erection of the building,— "1687." The person designated by the above letters was Mr. Thomas Ekins, the first steward of the Godolphin family who resided upon the Islands. He obtained a long lease of St. Martins from the "Lord Proprietor," and contributed very much to its cultivation and improvement.—There is no person of the same name now on Scilly.

During the late war, a few houses were erected near the Day-Mark, as a signal station. The walls, which are of stone, still remain, in good condition; but the wood-work has been removed.—Much ground hereabout might be advantageously brought into cultivation. The soil is good; and the few incroachments that have recently been made on the bare common, for agricultural purposes, bear plentiful crops. It is painful, therefore, to see so much land, capable of improvement, still lying waste.

Directing the view to the sea,—about three leagues North-North-East from St. Martin's

Head is the extensive assemblage of rocks called *the Seven Stones*, which have already been noticed in discussing the tradition of the *Lionesse*.<sup>c</sup> These rocks can hardly be said to belong to, or to constitute a part of, Scilly, yet they are frequently visited by the Islanders, on account of the quantities of large fish which abound near them.—A melancholy circumstance attends the recollection of their name: On the 27th of February, 1747, the *Lizard*, sloop of war, commanded by Captain Sisson, was wrecked near the Seven Stones; when all her crew, amounting to upwards of a hundred, individuals, unfortunately perished! A merchant brig lost her rudder, and sustained other considerable damage there, in the beginning of the last year: She was, however, happily brought into St. Mary's Pool, by boats from the different Islands.

The outer side of St. Martin's, or that which is exposed to the open sea, from the Day-Mark to White Island (a distance, in a straight line, of about a mile and a quarter) is indented in a capacious, but irregular, crescent, called *St. Martin's Bay*, in every part of which, at a little distance from the shore, are about fifteen fathoms of water. The cliffs are high and rocky, and there are several rocks standing

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<sup>c</sup> See Part I. Chap. iii. p. 54 *et. seq.*

at short distances from the land. The coast is diversified by different points and creeks, all of modern and vulgar denomination; but there is a very remarkable promontory on the West side of the cove next the Day-Mark, called *Burnt Hill*, consisting of two very steep ridges, and running into St. Martin's Bay to the distance of a furlong. In a direct line (due North) is a large rock called the *Murr*, from a sea-bird of that name by which it is frequented.

A little further to the West is an excavation called *Culver Hole*, in which both art and nature appear to have laboured. It is a large circular opening in the earth, close by the cliff, about twenty yards wide at top; and extending (from its surface, to the level of the sandy beach below) about ten yards in depth on the inner side. The bottom of this excavation is covered with sand; the front, towards the Bay, is a wall of natural rock, through which the sea flows, at high water, by a natural aperture, about twenty feet high, and ten feet wide: The walls or sides of the entrance are about sixteen feet thick. This place is, with much probability, supposed to have been a tin-work, as the ancients, in search of that metal which was once the staple commodity of these Islands, had no other method of mining than that of laying open

the earth so far as they could trace the ore. At present, Culver Hole, at a little expence, might be made a very commodious bathing-place by any gentleman residing on the Island.—Further to the West is another pit, but of smaller dimensions, being only twelve feet deep and seven feet in diameter. Conjecture also classes this amongst the remains of ancient tin-works.

In the rocky cliffs on this side of St. Martin's are two or three springs of fresh water; but they are difficult of access.

Proceeding along the continuous hill that forms the South-West side of St. Martin's Bay, the geologist will find much to arrest attention and excite enquiry. Casting the eye downward, the sea-shore presents an interesting variety of protruding rocks and sandy beaches. On the land side, some momentous alterations appear to have occurred, though probably at a very remote date. The soil, for a long tract, extending near a mile, seems to have been undermined, and literally washed away, to a depth of from two to three feet from the original surface; the height of which may be estimated from some little knolls or plats, still covered with moss, and which probably evaded the fury of the flood by means of the streams having separated, and worked their passage through softer grounds. What

now remains of this desolate spot is one vast agglutination of sand and pieces of granite, on which the process of petrification, or the formation of sand-stone, still appears to be going on by the silent operations of nature. Yet even this surface is scooped in many tortuous channels, and one deep ravine,—incontestible evidences of the rush of a vast body of waters down its steep declivity. Perhaps these effects were produced by the potent agency of a water-spout passing over the island; for the desolation extends completely across, from sea to sea. At other places, the sand, which had been blown up over the loftiest hills (as on the Northern coast of Cornwall) having recently been shifted, and in some measure dispersed, by the wind, has laid bare the remains of numerous hedges, and demonstrated the former existence of an extent of cultivation, in tracts which now seem abandoned to sterility.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> There is a house, lately built, in a commanding situation, near the principal hill in the Island, and not far from the Church. Some inclosures have recently been made hereabout. Talking to a man who was breaking up a piece of ground, the surface of which was covered with sand and fern, I made some remarks on the apparent poverty of the soil, but he assured me it was very good *below*; and, digging to the depth of from eighteen inches to two feet, he shewed me a fine black mould, capable of

Near the North-Western extremity of St. Martin's is *White Island*, the Northernmost of the whole group of Scilly. It contains, by estimation, about fifty acres, but principally consists of very rugged ridges of rock. It would be difficult to form a conjecture as to the derivation of its modern name. It appears to have been formerly joined to St. Martin's, whence it may be still approached on foot at low water, but over a very stony and uncomfortable isthmus, on which, however, I observed in no less than three places, great quantities of clay. This Island is wholly uncultivated, producing only fern and moss, and affording a scanty pasture to a few sheep and rabbits; yet from the appearance of the soil in places where some turves had recently been cut, it seems capable of cultivation. Several kelp-kilns line the shore.

“On the East side of this Island,” says Troutbeck, “a cavern goes in under ground

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carrying any crop. The plan is, therefore, to bury the sand, and dress the ground well with sea-weed, when it is found fully sufficient for every purpose of island-husbandry. *Quere.* If proper fences were raised, might not some of the more hardy kinds of fir (the planting of which has recently been attended with much success in many parts of Cornwall) be found to thrive here?—The growth of fruit and other trees at St. Mary's almost justifies the supposition.



so far, that no person now living ever saw the farther end of it. I heard a custom-house officer say, that he went in so far in a direct line, in search of run goods, that he could not see the light from the entrance, and that he was afraid to go further in, lest he should meet with water, or some other danger. It is supposed to have been an old tin-work; its direction is East and West."

This place is, by the inhabitants of St. Martin's, called *Piper's Hole*; an appellation which it shares in common with the more insignificant aperture at St. Mary's, and the more important cavern at Tresco. The advocates both of the Vulcanian and Plutonian systems of geology might here find much to engage their speculations, or perhaps, to reconcile their opinions. Indeed the whole appearance of White Island shews that it has been subject to agency of which we can now have but an imperfect idea, amounting at best to mere probability; but, if I considered the state of the Scilly Islands to have been materially affected by volcanoes or earthquakes, I should not hesitate to suppose that this Island had been subject to the severest part of the shocks. It seems to be rent, heaved, and distorted in a very surprizing manner. Its ridging, rocky protuberances, I have before noticed; but it is remarkable that while these

rocks, as well as all others appearing *on the land*, in the different Islands, are grey, and those in the water are brown, the sides and cliffs of the Piper's Hole under consideration are of the darkest *black*. The rocks, nevertheless, are of granite, having abundance of *mica*. When I visited Piper's Hole, the tide was flowing rapidly into it, so that my intention of exploring it was frustrated, and I own that its appearance was such as would probably have deterred me from venturing, had no such obstacle existed. Let the reader imagine a narrow passage or creek, perhaps not more than twenty feet wide—(I write from memory)—with lofty, rocky sable walls, presenting every appearance of having been rent assunder by the disruption of the hill that now afforded a gloomy channel to the sea. At the higher end of this creek, is the frightful aperture, about thirty feet high and nearly the width above mentioned, in which the Lethæan stream—(for so it appeared)—was flowing in silent yet awful swell. The rocks within, —above,—around,—all black as night; and not a sound to be heard on either side to relieve the wretchedness of the scene. This gloomy picture brought strongly to my mind the *descensus Averni* of the ancients; when, looking up, I saw a solitary puffin winging his noiseless flight into the gloomy cave. After

the appearance of this *bird of Acheron*, nothing was wanting to complete the dreariness of the view, which I left without regret, though not without interest.

On re-ascending the cliff near the entrance of the "Hole," my eye was caught by some pretty sparry formations on one of the rocks, which I broke off and brought away. These spars, though partaking the uniform external blackness, were delicately white beneath, and some were finely tinged with tints of red and green. A mingled hue of green and red was also visible next the black coating of the granite, seeming to denote the presence of oxide of iron.

At a little distance from Piper's Hole is another large fissure in the earth, extending from the extreme point of land, inwards, about a hundred and sixty yards, and forming a gloomy valley, lined with huge masses of black rock, the breadth of which may be about from forty to sixty feet. At the higher end of this fissure, the earth has evidently sunk twelve or fourteen feet.

At the Northernmost extremity of White Island is a high hill, surmounted by a cairn and a burrow. This is the only burrow on the Island. This hill I suppose is the highest in Scilly, and it commands a very extensive view, including St. Martin's, Teän, and St. Helen's,

in its immediate vicinity; part of St. Mary's (seen over the downs of Tresco;) Samson; and the remote Island of St. Agnes,—about eight miles distant.

A large cluster, and extensive ledge, of rocks, lie off the Western side of White Island, between which, and the rocks before mentioned, there is a deep channel called *Porth Moron*, containing from eight to ten fathoms of water.

Returning to St. Martin's, there is seen, on the side of a hill about a hundred yards from the sea shore, a large rock with a flat surface, supporting another, of a globular form at the bottom, (and thence denominated *the Bowl*) in a manner which appears very singular. The top rock is about twelve feet high, and thirty five in circumference, and is thought to have been an object of Druidical worship. Whether its base were rounded by nature or art, does not appear; but the seeming singularity of its position is much lessened on inspection, which shews the introduction of small stones between its base and the platform.

At the other extremity of this hill is a very lofty and majestic carn called *Top Rock*; the masses of which, in every inclining position, seem to threaten destruction to all who may approach. This remarkable carn was struck by a thunder-bolt on the 20th of November

1751, when a great number of the stones were toppled down on the sides of the hill ;—a mass of the rock, weighing more than half a ton, was hurled to the distance of a hundred yards, Northward ;—and several smaller fragments were carried above a quarter of a mile by the force of the explosion ! The ground and ferns around were scorched in a surprizing manner, especially to the Westward ; and a horse and upwards of sixty sheep were killed. This carn stands on a lofty hill forming a sort of amphitheatre, but of steep ascent ; and the scene here is tranquil, and somewhat romantic, though rather wild. A recluse, however, would not disdain the spot as a place of interesting retirement.

Numerous rocks and ledges, of different names, diversify, without embellishing, the North-West coast of St. Martin's. The principal of these are *Lion Rock*, *Black Rock*, *Penadgy 'Island,'* and *Plum 'Island'!*

On the Westernmost promontory of St. Martin's, and directly over against Teän, is a remarkable rock called *Tinkler's Rock*, which, from the singularity of its appearance, is supposed to have been an object of Druid worship. Near this are two circles of erect stones, (about sixty feet, each circle, in circumference) and an ancient burrow.

A little farther to the Southward, *Babb's Carn* (a romantic pile, near a hundred feet

high) and *South Carn*, form *Lower Town Bay*, in which is a small pier for boats, but it has long been neglected.

From Lower Town to Middle Town is a broad valley, formed by a high but level bank thrown up by nature (for art does little towards the advantage of the Scilly Islands) extending along by the sea to the South; and having a high hill, which retires with a gentle sweep, on the North. The appearance of this highly-cultivated valley when the author first saw it—(in the Autumn of 1820)—in the rich and diversified hues of its abundant crops, left a feeling of gratification on his breast which is not yet wholly obliterated.

Between Middle Town and the Church is the *School House*, stated by some authors to have been built by the inhabitants, at an expence of *sixteen pounds!* The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge pays the master a salary of fifteen pounds per annum, and provides the scholars with books of every kind. From forty to fifty children, of both sexes, receive instruction here.

I shall close this account of St. Martin's with the following narrative, which I give in the words of Mr. Troutbeck:

“ In the year 1753, as some fishermen, in a small boat were fishing near a bay on the North-East side of this Island, a large fish

“ came swimming round the boat, which very  
“ much surprized them, and came so near that  
“ they were afraid it would upset their boat.  
“ The fishermen put a small rope over the  
“ boat’s side with a noose; the fish came so  
“ near that they got the noose over its head,  
“ and rowed the boat to a shallow place that  
“ was near by, and dragged the fish upon it.  
“ When they examined the fish they found a  
“ wooden hoop (twenty inches diameter, such  
“ as slides up and down a ship’s mast for  
“ fastening the main-sail to) round it, between  
“ its head and back fin; the hoop had been  
“ so long upon it, that the fish was grown al-  
“ most to cover the hoop, in a very surprizing  
“ manner, and the hoop was grown green with  
“ sea-weed. The fish was thirteen feet and  
“ six inches long, and about twenty six inches  
“ diameter in the middle; it had fins but no  
“ scales, and a very smooth skin very black  
“ on the back, and a little white under the  
“ belly. They opened the fish, and found no  
“ liver in it, nor any fat in its belly, but a very  
“ large gall fastened to one side. The fish  
“ was not of a fat and oily nature, and much  
“ resembled a shark. It may seem strange to  
“ many people how the wooden hoop should  
“ be upon the fish. A captain of a ship thus  
“ accounts for it, who says it is customary  
“ with sea-faring people to hang beef over-

“ board, and to let it be in the sea to get the  
 “ salt out of it ; and to prevent it from being  
 “ torn in pieces by the motion of the ship  
 “ through the water, they generally put it in a  
 “ net, fastened to a hoop to keep it extended,  
 “ so the fish to get at the beef must have got  
 “ the hoop over its head, and by pushing it-  
 “ self through the water, forced the hoop be-  
 “ hind its fore-fins, which prevented the fish  
 “ from getting clear of the hoop again, and  
 “ the net must have decayed by being so long  
 “ in the water, and forced from the hoop by  
 “ the force of the fish through the water.”

—And so much for this *tale of a hoop* ;  
 which, notwithstanding the disadvantageous  
 dress in which it is presented does not appear  
 destitute of interest. Had I been anxious to  
 “ eke out ” this account of St. Martin’s, I  
 might have picked up a few other stories of  
 equal importance, but this, I trust, will suffice.  
*Ex uno disce omnes.*

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## TEAN, ST. HELEN’S, &c.

Due West from Tinkler’s Point, at St. Mar-  
 tin’s (from which it is not above a quarter of a  
 mile distant) lies the Island called TEAN, or



TEÄN ;—properly THEON, and hence, evidently, of Grecian denomination. It contains about seventy acres, but is uninhabited, yet it was a place of dwellings till the last forty or fifty years. A Mr. Nance, of Cornwall, who first introduced the art of making kelp into these Islands (in the year 1684,) resided here, as did his descendants down to the last generation: Their house still remains, and is occasionally occupied. The present branches of his family, who reside on St. Martin's, hold the island of Teän, and cultivate a few acres of it, leaving the rest to pasture sheep. From the remains of numerous hedges, the greater part of the island appears to have been inclosed formerly, and the soil is apparently good in many places.

The sea has evidently made considerable incroachments on this Island during the lapse of centuries. The East, North, and West sides are rocky; but there is a very fine sandy beach on the South, the sweep of which is near half a mile. On the North side of the Island I saw a chasm in the rocks similar to that which has already been described in White Island, but much smaller. The rocks around this chasm exhibit the same appearance as those noticed in that place: Their surface is black, under which a sort of sparry substance, perfectly white, is found, to the

depth of more than half an inch; and a piece of this being broken off exhibits on the inside a mixture of various colours,—the effect, perhaps, of mineral bodies.—The rocks all around this island exhibit those traces called by miners *veins* or *lodes*, and perhaps a field for successful adventure may yet be found in this, at present, almost neglected spot.

Here are several remarkable carns, but of modern denomination: Near one of these (called *Yellow Carn*) are the vestiges of a Druidical circle. I discovered no burrows here.

*Great Hill* is a lofty eminence of singular abruptness, especially towards the North. Its top and sides are covered with granite rocks of lofty and menacing forms, presenting (at a distance) the appearance of a time-bleached fortress. Huge masses have fallen around in wild confusion;—the terrible vestiges of elemental power.

A high rock called *Penbrose* (from the Cornu-British appellation *Pedn Brauze*, signifying the *high headland*) lies about fifty yards to the North of this Island. It is, alternately an isthmus and an islet, as are many of the rocks which, in the charts, and by the natives of Scilly, are denominated *Islands*!

The passage between Teän and St. Martin's is called *Teän Sound*. It is studded with

rocks and ledges on each side, but has a good depth of water in the middle, and may be safely used by a skilful pilot.

St. HELEN's Island is somewhat less than a quarter of a mile to the North-West of Teän. The channel between them, in which there is plenty of water (declining inward from fifteen to three fathoms) is called *St. Helen's Sound*. St. Helen's Island is estimated to contain eighty acres. It is uninhabited and uncultivated, though part of the soil is said to be good. Seen at a distance, the brown hues of the fern, and the grey clusters of granite, give the whole a very sterile aspect. On the Southern side of the island, the remains of several hedges, and of an ancient Church, are still to be seen. Of the latter, Troutbeck says, it is "the most ancient Christian-like building in all the Islands. It consists of "a South isle" (*aisle*) "thirty one feet and six "inches long, by fourteen feet and three inches "wide, from which two arches, low and of an "uncouth style, open into a North *isle* twelve "feet wide, by nineteen feet and six inches "long. There are two windows in each *isle*, "formed in the most rustick manner; and "there is a stone jutting out, near the Eastern "window in the North *isle* like a platform, on "which it is supposed by some, the image of

“the saint stood, to whom the Church was dedicated. If this conjecture be true,” he adds, “the stone must have been placed there long after the Church was founded, for it is undoubtedly much older than image worship, which was not known in England till the latter end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century. It is probable some priests or monks used to reside near the Church, for there are still the remains of some houses built in the form of cloisters.”

It is much to be regretted that even the venerable ruins of this rude but interesting edifice, which remained in Troutbeck's time, have been since so mutilated that it would be difficult to form any correct idea of the original plan and disposition of the building, from the few fragments, protected by brambles, which now remain. The present heap of ruins is not more than from two to three feet high in any place; but some of the old people of St Martin's with whom I have conversed on the subject, remember when the walls were five or six feet in height, and free from the rubbish which now overwhelms them. The commander of one of His Majesty's sloops, which was stationed here during the last war, caused a great many of the stones to be taken away to make a *hedge* for his garden on an adjoining spot! Thus the desecration of temples is not

alone to be attributed to Vandals, Goths, and Huns!—I agree with the conjectures of Troutbeck as to the antiquity of St. Helen's Church, and the probability that the adjacent buildings (the ruins of which are in the same state with those of the Church) were occupied by monks: And, from the contiguity of this Island to Tresco, Teän and St. Martin's, I presume that the inhabitants of these places resorted to St. Helen's for public worship, before they had churches of their own.—The site of St. Helen's Church was well chosen: It stood on a sloping ground, being sheltered by a long high hill from the fury of a Northern gale, and opening to St. Mary's Road (edged round, and, as it were, inclosed, by Islands) on the South.

Between St. Helen's and the back, or Northernmost part, of Tresco, lies the little desert islet called Northwithiel, containing about nine acres. It is uninhabited, but is used by the people of Tresco for pasturing cattle. There are some Druidical remains, and many burrows, or places of sepulture, on this island. One of these dormitories is distinguished by a large flat rock, above twenty feet wide, lying on two stones erect, so that a man might creep under it. This was probably the grave of some eminent character.

The three Islands of Teän, St. Helen's, and

Northwithiel, form *St. Helen's Pool*, on the South, which has good anchorage, and is the place appointed by act of Parliament for a quarantine station for all vessels infected with pestilential disorders, which may come to these Islands.\* There is a pest-house on *St. Helen's* for the reception of persons labouring under such complaints, but happily it has never been needed for the peculiar purposes for which it was intended. Indeed it is so small that it could only afford accommodation to a few, and the slightly-infected, by being immured with those who might be incurable, would stand a great chance of sharing their fate. It is a neat house, built with hewn stone, and covered with slate, about fifteen feet square, and twelve feet high. There is a good well adjacent, and a convenient landing-place in front.—Before the year 1764, the quarantine station was in the harbour of New

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\* “ If the plague shall appear on board any ship, being to the northward of *Cape Finisterre*, the master shall immediately proceed to the harbour of *St. Helen's Pool*, between the uninhabited Islands of *St. Helen's*, *Tean*, and *North Withell*, or to such other place as his Majesty by advice of his Privy Council shall appoint.” 29 *Geo. II.* c. 8.—The penalty for having intercourse (under such circumstances) with other ships or persons is felony without benefit of clergy. 26 *Geo. II.* c. 8. § 2.

Grinsey, between the Islands of Tresco and Bryher, to the great danger of the inhabitants of those Islands, and to the whole population of Scilly.

There is a convenient landing-place at St. Helen's formed, apparently, with but little expence, by removing some large stones from the beach, and arranging them in two lines, or little quays, on either side of the shore. By similar measures, similar benefits might be conferred on all the Islands, most of which are difficult of access from the want of such conveniences.

About half a mile to the Northward of St. Helen's is *Round Island*, containing only about three acres, and exhibiting a most terrific aspect. It consists wholly of rock, rising abruptly from the sea on every side, to a great height, and is utterly inaccessible. Its summit is perfectly convex, its form is rotund, and its dark and lowering figure is truly appalling.

On the Western side of St. Helen's, and behind Northwithiel, are two large and remarkable rocks called *Menarworth*, and *the Golden Ball*. The former appears to have been cleft by some convulsion of nature, as it rises from the sea in two distinct masses, the walls of which, however, perfectly correspond.

Seen from St. Helen's there appears a chasm or passage in the mass nearest to that Island, through which the waters rush, in stormy weather, in great bulk, and with impetuous velocity. Golden Ball is nearly joined to St. Helen's by a ridge of rocks.



## CHAPTER III.

## TRESKO ISLAND.

*Position, Dimensions, and Population of Tresko.—Its singular Form.—Carn Near.—Sand Hills.—Fish Cellar.—Fine Pond.—Ruins of the Abbey.—Tresko formerly wooded.—Druidical Circle.—Missionary House.—School.—Church.—Town.—Harbour of Old Grinsey.—Dolphin Downs.—Piper's Hole.—Other subterraneous Passages.—Remarkable Rocks around the Island.—Castles.—Pleasing Views.—Samphire abundant.*

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**THE** Off-Islands (with the exception of St. Agnes) lie in a direction bearing nearly North-East and South-West. In the centre of this line is TRESKO,—in extent and importance the second of the Scilly Isles, containing eight hundred and eighty acres, one hundred and nine houses, and four hundred and eighty inhabitants, chiefly pilots and fishermen.—It is about a mile and a half distant from the

nearest points of St. Mary's and St. Martin's, but not more than a quarter of a mile from Bryher.

The outline, or coast, of Tresco is exceedingly irregular, being indented by several bays and creeks, and extended by numerous points and headlands. The houses are chiefly aggrouped near the beach on the North East side, (where is the harbour of *Old Grinsey*) and are here called *Dolphin Town*, probably from an abbreviation of the name of the noble family of Godolphin, so long Proprietors of these Islands. There are, however, several other houses on the South West side of Tresco, facing Bryher, as well as on the road leading across the Island, besides detached dwellings in different parts.

At the Southern extremity of Tresco (which terminates in a point) is a very romantic pile of massy rocks called *Carn Near*, probably from its being the highest point to St. Mary's. This part of the Island is singularly heaped in small hills, and appears rather to have gained from the sea by these sabulous accumulations, than to have suffered by its incroachments. These hills are chiefly composed of a fine white sand, which is overgrown, on the land side, with a vigorous fern, but on the sea-coast presents a broad and continuous glare that almost overpowers the sight.

These sandy hillocks are terminated by a considerable hill extending across the Island from East to West, but uncultivated. Descending this hill the eye is gratified by a more genial scene. A spacious plain, terminated on the North by another hill, and exhibiting many verdant indications of the powers of agriculture, here salutes the view, and a fine piece of fresh water,—about half a mile in length, and a furlong in breadth, gives the whole a novel and unexpected charm. This Pond is sheltered from the sea by an ever-green bank, abounding with camomile flowers, which grow in great plenty hereabouts, and dispense a very agreeable odour; and the land is cultivated on each side, down to the brink of the water. The Pond is about five feet deep in Summer, and six in Winter. The fish-cellar, (which has been described before\*) fine bay, and gently-sloping beach, to the West, make this altogether a pleasing picture.

The *Abbey Pond*, as the above-mentioned piece of water is denominated, derives its name from a religious house that anciently stood near it, on the South-East side; of which, however, the remains are so few, that it is difficult, if not impossible, in the absence of all authentic records, to form any accurate

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\* See Part I. chap. vi. p. 140.

idea of its original dimensions and accommodations. All that has escaped the ravages of time, the fury of storms, and (perhaps) the devastating hand of man, is a piece of wall, standing East and West, about twenty five feet long, and twenty high, and a little inclosure (until lately used as a burying ground) adjoining. There are two pointed arches, of good workmanship, in the piece of wall still remaining; the larger being twelve feet high, by eight broad; and the other, seven feet by three. These arches are cased with a fine reddish stone, supposed to have been brought from Normandy, nothing of the kind being found in Scilly. The wall is nearly overgrown with ivy and rank grass; but, from its thickness, appears to have been calculated for strength and durability.

Troutbeck is of opinion that what remains of this ancient edifice is but a part of the *Church*, and that the Monastery,—of which no vestiges remain,—stood below it. He says that the “Abbey was founded in the tenth century, and enriched by some of the Earls of Cornwall after the Norman conquest.” “This Church,” he adds, “is supposed to have been burnt down. A man, about thirteen years ago, was employed to remove some stones and rubbish at the West end of the ancient building, to make more room for burying the

dead, who found a large piece of a bomb-shell, and several pieces of coked timber, among the stones and rubbish that he cleared away." Probably, therefore, the violence and fanaticism of the Parliamentarians, wantonly completed what the furious zeal of the eighth Henry begun, and thus deprived Scilly of one of its fairest ornaments.—The oldest people at Tresco remember having heard their parents declare that the ruins were in their present state when *they* were children.

Before I conclude this subject I may repeat a general remark,—that the monks always chose the most pleasant situations for the site of their houses, and that those situations had, for the most part, the conveniences of wood and water in their immediate vicinity. That these advantages were not wanting to the Abbey at Tresco is evident, not only from the fine pond still remaining, but from the name of the adjoining hill on the North, which is still called the *Abbey Wood*, and where roots of trees have been dug up, in the memory of man. Had the learned Whitaker known these facts, he might have saved himself much of his labour in endeavouring to prove that "*the forest of Guffaer*," of which King John granted the tythes of three acres of *assart*, or cleared land, to the Abbey of Scilly, was in this Island. "The forest," says

he, "was, we may be assured, from the very appellation of the Isle, a forest of elder trees." Leland, indeed, mentions the "wild bores swyne" which found shelter in it, whence Whitaker and others have concluded that it must have been of considerable extent. "But now," says that elegant antiquarian, "the forest is vanished, 'the wild bores swyne' to which it once afforded protection, are wholly extinct," and, (he might have added) their successors, the *pigs*,—which are still very plentiful on this as well as on all the other Scilly Islands,—deprived of elder-berries, and all unconscious of the taste of acorns, are compelled to seek subsistence amongst the weeds that cover the sea-shore!

The Abbey Pond formerly abounded in fine eels, which Troutbeck pronounces "the finest that ever were tasted"! Those fish, however, at present, are small and somewhat scarce.

Borlase says, in his account of the Scilly Islands, "I was shewn a passage which the sea has made within these seven years, through the sand-bank that fences the Abbey Pond, by which breach, upon the first high tide and violent storm at East, or East-South-East, one may venture to prophesy that this still, and now beautiful, pool of fresh water, will become a branch of the sea, and consequently exposed to all the rage of tide and storm."

Since the Doctor wrote, many storms have occurred, and the sea has, even within a few years past, again broken over the bank, and, for a while, spoiled the pond, and this may be one cause of the deterioration of the breed of the eels: But the evil is not without remedy; and, were proper measures adopted to repair and consolidate the bank by bringing stones from the neighbouring shore, the Pond would be maintained in its present beauty and utility, and the Island preserved from irremediable disruption.

It would add much to the beauty and utility of the Pond, if it were surrounded by willow-trees; the boughs of which would be very serviceable to the Islanders for making baskets to catch lobsters and crabs.

On the summit of the hill that lies to the North of the Abbey Pond, is a Druidical circle of great extent. In the centre is a group of romantic rocks, and a person standing on one of these, must be visible nearly to the whole Island. The circle has lately been broken in upon, and several of the stones have been removed, to form some inclosures on the hill. Those which remain stand at the distance of eighty yards from the central pile, near which there is evidently a sacrificing rock,—supported from the ground by stones, and having rock-basons on the top.

Near the end of this hill, and on the Easternmost point of Tresco, which is called the *Lizard*—(not, like the Lizard in Cornwall, from its height,<sup>b</sup> but, perhaps, from its lying nearly in a line due West of that promontory)—there is a small square stone block-house commanding the channel between St. Martin's and the Eastern Islands, and the interfluent sea. But this post, like all other military stations at Scilly, except the Garrison, has long been without troops. Some remains of the encampment of the Parliamentary army may be seen on the shore to the North-West of the Lizard.

Descending the hill in a Northerly direction, the Missionary House, and the town, together with the Harbour of Old Grinsey, open the view.

The *Missionary House* was built by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge at an expence of £400, and has lately been extensively repaired, and greatly improved. It is pleasantly situated, although the aspect is North-North-East, and commands a view of some well cultivated fields, terminated by sweeping hills, hoary cars, and the distant blue sea, in front;—a continuous and ridgy

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<sup>b</sup> *Lis-ard* signifies, in the Cornish language, “a lofty projection.”



hill, with a ruined pile, on the left;—and the Harbour of *Old Grinsey*, backed by the Islands of Northwithiel, St. Helen's, and Tean, —and generally animated by the presence of shipping,—on the right. For size and convenience it is certainly nearly equal to any house on Scilly.

In the year 1747, the Earl of Godolphin established a School in Tresco, for instructing twelve boys in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and, in 1753, the Rev. Richard Corbett Harts-horne, rector of Brosely, in Shropshire, gave £25 towards the support either of a Minister or a schoolmaster in this Island, under the direction of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The School-room was rebuilt, a few years since, by subscriptions, chiefly collected in England, and the Society provides the children with books, and pays the master £30 per annum, for teaching on the National System. The number of scholars is about eighty.\*

The Church lies low, in the middle of the town, but might be passed over at a first glance, as it bears no external indications of its

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\* This salary, I understand, has lately been reduced; the National System of education being almost impracticable where the attendance of the scholars is so irregular as at Scilly.

character. It is fifty-seven feet in length, about fourteen in breadth, and twelve in height. Within, its appearance is not only neat but elegant, the pews being painted blue and white, and the pulpit, desk, and communion table covered with fine blue cloth.

There is a small meeting-house for Wesleyan methodists on Tresco, and there are a few Baptists on the same Island.

It has before been observed that the town stands near the Harbour of *Old Grinsey*. On the inner point of land, commanding the entrance to the Harbour, and which is called *Block-House Point*, is *Dover Battery*, which, if repaired, would be a strong defence in time of war.

There are different Carns around the Northern shore of Tresco, but none entitled to particular notice.

From Dolphin Town, a road, diversified by houses on each side, runs across the Island to some wretched cottages, still, unfortunately, denominated *the Palace!* from a house of public entertainment formerly kept here. There is a very good inn on this part of the Island.

The North-West half of Tresco is nearly level on top, which is about a hundred and forty feet above the sea. This place is called *Dolphin Downs*, on which are some remains of tin-pits. The Downs are wholly uncul-

tivated, and the land is much injured by being pared for fuel. Over the whole surface if this part of the Island, small detached pieces of *gypsum*—a species of alabaster—are found; some, white as snow; others, finely streaked; and of a sparry formation. On the Eastern side of the Downs is a ruinous pile called the *Look-Out*, serving as a signal-post for the Preventive men. On the West are some romantic ridges running down to the sea, covered on their summits with masses of granite, interspersed with fern and furze. The descent is, in some places, precipitous. There are some convenient creeks for bathing on this side, which may be approached by going round the bottom of the hill.

An object of great curiosity to most persons visiting Scilly, is *Piper's Hole*,—a subterranean passage of great extent and singular nature. *Piper's Hole* lies at the Northern extremity of Tresco, in the side of *Tregarthen Hill*, by which the Downs are terminated in that direction. It is approached by descending some large, rugged, and dangerous rocks, and again scrambling up over some ponderous stones which the sea has thrown against this part of the Island, and the further accession of which, will, probably, in time, wholly block up the opening.

In order to explore this place, it is necessary that candles, or torches, a small boat, and

proper attendants, should be provided. The entrance, at present, is about five feet high, and as many wide. The large stones protruding over head, and those lying below, are damp, and extremely inconvenient to pass, on account of the continual exudation (if I may so term it) on all sides. The passage is continued through a solid granite rock, but of very rugged surface, for the length of eighty four feet, when it opens into a cavern, thirty-four feet high; in which is a pool of water, sixty-one feet long, and fourteen feet wide, and from ten to fourteen feet deep; the depth naturally varying, according to the season, and the state of the atmosphere. The water is quite fresh, cool, and pellucid, and has the taste and appearance of spring-water. There are no springs, however, discoverable, in the surrounding rocks, neither has the water any outlet. On the inner side of the pool (which may be crossed in a small boat) there is a fine sandy beach about twenty yards in length, terminated by the rocks which form the end of the cavern, and by which the silly tale of this passage having communicated with that at St. Mary's, of the same name, is shewn to be wholly fabulous.<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>d</sup> The vulgar denomination of *Piper's Hole*, given to this and other subterraneous passages in the different Islands,

There are two other remarkable caverns at the North end of Tresco, one of which is about twelve feet high, three feet wide, and seventy feet long; and the other is twenty feet high, ten feet wide, and above two hundred feet long. These are supposed to have been connected with old tin works, of which there are several, though slight, vestiges, on different parts of the hill.

On the North West side of the hill, and about three hundred yards from Piper's Hole, is a cavern called *the Gun*, the length of which is about sixty feet, where there is a spring of fresh water called the *Gun-Well*, constantly running. This is the only fresh-water-stream on Tresco.

The channel between Tresco and Bryher is called *New Grinsey Harbour*. At the entrance there are twenty fathoms of water, which depth gradually diminishes to half a fathom. There are two large rocks, called the *Kettle*, and *Kettle Bottom*, at the back of Tresco; and another rock called the *Horse* in a bay on Bryher side; but the entrance of the Harbour is safe, and vessels may anchor in

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seems glaringly inapplicable. May it not, however, be a corruption from the Greek Πιπασω, *potum præbeo*,—"affording water;" a name equally applicable to springs or ponds, and to adits.

seven fathoms of water near *Hangman's Island*, which is a large and high rock lying between the two Islands. It derives its name from the circumstance of some soldiers having been executed on it when the Parliamentary troops were at Tresco.

On the East side of the entrance of New Grinsey, on a low point of land is a circular stone tower, with a platform and battery in front, called *Oliver Cromwell's Castle*. The tower is sixty feet high, and about a hundred and fifty feet in circumference. The walls are twelve feet thick; raised on arches: The roof is flat, and bomb-proof; and has a battery for small cannon, with a parapet wall six feet in height. The platform in front is constructed in the most substantial manner, paved with stone, and defended by a thick parapet, the guns of which might sweep the Harbour in every direction. This Castle was repaired in the year 1740, and put into a good state of defence; but there having been no person appointed to reside in it, the floors have long since fallen to decay, but the doors and bolts still remain. It is much to be wished that so serviceable a building as this must necessarily be in time of war, should not be suffered to fall into utter ruin through a misplaced economy, or ignorance of its being and condition.

On the top of the hill, almost immediately above this,—and the ascent to which is ex-

tremely fatiguing from the extraordinary acclivity of the ground and the quantity of rocks and fern by which the rise is impeded,—are the ruins of a fortress called *King Charles's Castle*, which was also a place of great strength although not so well calculated to defend the Harbour from a near enemy as is the fortification below. It is said indeed, that this was demolished in order that the materials might be used in constructing the other. Enough, however, remains, to prove that it was a work of no small cost and labour. That part of the building which faced the Harbour, was circular, and the main wall appears to have been bomb-proof. It is six feet in thickness. Several windows and embrasures, with a door way, four feet wide and six feet high, of massy workmanship, are still remaining. On the land side are the remains of the lines of a fort, by which that part of the Castle was guarded from surprize.

Returning towards the inhabited part of the Island, the view is peculiarly diversified and pleasing; embracing cultivated fields, hills, houses, carns, and rocks, backed by St. Mary's Garrison, on the one hand;—the Islands of Bryher and Samson on the other;—and the rocky protuberances of St. Agnes, crowned by its lofty light-house, in the distance.

Nearly one half of Tresco is still uncultivated, though very capable of improvement.

The samphire growing on the rocks around this Island is of the finest sort, and in great abundance. It is preserved for pickling by being put into small casks, and covered with a strong brine, which turns it of a yellow colour, but vinegar restores its greenness. Some of these casks of pickles are sent to distant parts of England, where they are very acceptable presents.



## CHAPTER IV.

## BRYHER AND SAMSON ISLANDS.

*Position, Dimensions, and Population of BRYHER.—New Grinsey Harbour.—Shipman Head.—Gulf.—Terrific Rocks.—Watch Hill.—Bryher Town.—The Church.—Gweäll Hill.—The Pond.—Wells, and Spring.—Samson Hill.—The Green.—General Remarks.—SAMSON ISLAND, much wasted by the Sea.—Present Dimensions, and Population.—Destructive Effects of Sand.—Hills and Burrows.—SCILLY ISLAND.—GWEÄLL ISLAND.—WHITE ISLAND.—Various Rocks described.*

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**O**N the Western side of Tresco, from which it is not more than a quarter of a mile distant, though nearly three miles from St. Mary's Pool, is the Island of BRYHER, containing three hundred and thirty acres, twenty four houses, and one hundred and forty inhabitants. Troutbeck says "not many years ago, there were only two families in it, but now there are eleven." Two years since

there were twenty two, and now, as appears from the enumeration of the houses, there are twenty four:—A proof of the rapidly-increasing population of the Scilly Isles!

Bryher from the singularity of its outline, has been ludicrously compared to a *skate*! and, indeed, whoever looks on the map, will find it bears some resemblance to the shape of that fish. It consists of several very steep hills connected by tracts of low land, a considerable part of which is cultivated.—The extreme length of the Island is one mile and a half; its average breadth is scarcely half a mile.

The Eastern shore of Bryher, running along in nearly the same direction as the proximate coast of Tresco, contributes to form the Harbour of *New Grinsey*. The depth of water at the entrance of this Harbour is twenty fathoms; but this rapidly diminishes, and terminates in half a fathom. The anchorage is good, and small vessels frequently put in here.

From the fish-cellars at Tresco, a large bed of sand, called *Tresco Flats*, extends to Bryher and Samson, and may be crossed on foot at low water.

The Northern extremity of Bryher is called *Shipman Head*. It is a lofty and precipitous pile of solid rocks, ascending to a considerable height, and calculated to excite terror as well

from its dangerous acclivities, as from the ponderous and inclining masses that overhang its summit. The constant howling of the waves around it, serves not a little to increase the dreariness of its aspect. This vast hill of rock is completely divided from the Island—(a circumstance noticed by no preceding writer!)—by a passage which the Islanders call the *Gulf*, the sides of which are nearly perpendicular, and appear to have been rent from each other, rather than worn by the washing of the tide. The length of this Gulf is about fifty yards, and its breadth two. A large stone, or rock, which obstructs the passage, probably fell into its present position during the separation of the adjoining hills.

On scrambling along the rocks contiguous to this abode of desolation, I observed some large strata of a fine white sparry nature, imbedded amongst the granite near the shore.—Gypsum is found on the hills here, as on the three Islands before described.

The Northernmost hill of Bryher is extremely painful to traverse, abounding with rocks and stones, and the turf which once filled the interstices having been dug out for fuel; so that it is impossible to take two steps on the same level. On one side there is a high pile of rocks, towards the harbour; on the other side, the declivities towards the sea are dan-

gerous, and the cliffs steep. There are, however, some remains of inclosures and circles on the sides of this hill. There are also burrows on different parts of the Island.

The next eminence, which is called *Watch Hill*, is the highest in the Island, and affords a prospect of all the inhabited Isles of Scilly; and, on a fine day, of the Land's End, bearing due East, about ten leagues distant. There are some ruins of houses on this hill, and those few houses which still remain,—or, rather, which have lately been erected, under it, are called *the Town of Bryher!* The hills towards the Southward and Westward have a green and pleasing appearance.

The late *Church* of Bryher was the smallest in Scilly. Its length, inside, was only twenty-two feet; its breadth, fourteen; and its height, seven feet and a half.—Such, probably, were the original dimensions of all the Off-Island Churches.—Bryher Church had long been much out of repair, yet its sequestered appearance was not displeasing.—In the neat little burial ground surrounding it, I noted the following inscription on a young woman who died in child-bed:

“The babe springs to light,—

“But she that bare him breathes her last.”

Another of these humble mementos alters

an expression of Pope's, perhaps not much for the worse :

“ How loved, how honoured, once, avails thee not ;

“ To whom related, or by whom *forgot*.”

In 1821, the Society for Promoting the Enlargement and Building of Churches and Chapels granted the sum of £ 250 towards rebuilding the Church at Bryher. The work is now in progress, and the building will probably be opened for Divine worship in the course of the present Spring.—The ground plan is taken from the Church at St. Agnes.

On the South-West part of Bryher, and opposite Gweäll Island, is a promontory, terminated by a very steep and high green hill, called *Gweäll Hill*. On each side of this promontory is a bay ; and, in the centre of the isthmus, is a fine lake or pond of fresh water, covering a space of between three and four acres, but subject to brackishness by the spray of the sea.

There are three wells of very good water in Bryher ; but one of them becomes dry, and another nearly so, at neap tides ;—their communication with the sea, is, therefore, past dispute. There is also a spring of fresh water in a cliff in the North-West part of the Island, “ upon which,” it is observed, “ the sun never shines.” It is too remote to be of service, and is difficult of access.

The Southernmost hill of Bryher is called *Samson Hill*, from its proximity to the Island of that name. There are three burrows on its summit, but the flat stones which formerly covered them have been removed. On the West side of this hill is an extensive plain, called *the Green*, where the Islanders indulge in the recreation of walking, and conversing with their acquaintance, on Sunday evenings. This seems a more sociable feature in their character than is observable amongst the inhabitants of either of the other Islands.—This Green is a pleasing walk, and is terminated by a pretty outlet called (but for what reason it were vain to enquire) *Russia Bay*. Perhaps this name of Russia is (like the modern names of many other places in Scilly) corrupted from some more ancient and expressive word.

There is much land yet in Bryher which only wants the hand of cultivation to cause it to “give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;” and on the whole, this may be reckoned as pleasing a spot as either of the Off-Islands.

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The Island of SAMSON lies longitudinally nearly due South of Bryher, to which there are strong grounds for supposing it was for-

merly united, as it is connected with that Island by sands, which are passable at low water, and, on the shifting of which, the remains of hedges have been discovered in places which are now more than twelve feet under water at high tides. Some ruins of houses are also still visible in the sands on the shore.

Samson, in its present state, contains about a hundred and twenty acres, seven houses, and thirty four inhabitants. It consists of two high hills, the outermost of which is in form of a cone, but the inner one, which is called *Bryher Hill*, is of a more rotund form. The latter is covered with large rocks, stones, and sand which has wholly destroyed all traces of vegetation, and presents nothing to interest the visitor, except the melancholy remains of a few inclosures, and some large masses of rock, split and scattered by lightning.—The other hill is crowned by a line of sepulchral mounds, —the solitary, but not undisturbed, dormitories of the illustrious dead of generations far remote.\*

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\* Troutbeck, who is copied by some subsequent writers, numbers eleven of those burrows, but I only observed seven. Perhaps, however, the confusion occasioned by the removal of the earth and stones for purposes of curiosity or convenience, may have caused me to overlook

But little of Samson is cultivated, or capable of cultivation. The inhabitants support themselves by fishing, making kelp, and piloting occasionally, but they regret that there is no branch-pilot on the Island, so that their profits from this latter source of employment are frequently contested, and even borne away, by the licensed pilots of other Islands.

There is no place of worship on Samson; the Islanders therefore attend the Churches of the other Islands on Sundays, as well as on other occasions connected with the public rites of religion.

The water on Samson is so very bad as to be unfit for use in Summer; the Islanders are therefore forced to fetch that necessary article in boats from Bryher or Tresco. On the low neck of land connecting the two hills of which the Island is composed, there are two wells, which have been recently sunk, but they are nearly choked with sand, the increase of which, even within the last half a century, is astonishing, and its destructive effect deplorable. My guide,—an aged and intelligent man of Tresco,—told me that he remembered when the neck before mentioned, consisted of fine meadows, the little eminences around it being

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some; and the Island is not sufficiently interesting to invite a second visit.



covered with blackberry bushes. This was between forty and fifty years since. Although it is now utterly destitute of any green thing, yet it may be mentioned, as a proof of the goodness of the soil before it was thus encroached upon, that, on removing the sand to the depth of two feet or less, a fine strong clay is discovered, which, no doubt, was formerly capable of carrying any crop.

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Due West from the centre of Bryher, and about half a mile distant, is the famous large rock, or Isle, of *Scilly*, which gives name to the whole group of Islands and rocks around it. It is not more than a quarter of a mile in circumference, and consists of solid rock, divided into two very distinguished cone-like tops, on each of which there is a little rank grass; and, on one, a pool of fresh water. It is neither the highest nor outermost of the Scilly rocks, as some have asserted. The depth of water around it is considerable.

Some years ago, (it has been related to me) during a violent storm, a vessel was thrown in the fork, between the two tops of Scilly, and dashed to pieces. Many of the crew perished, but others saved themselves by scrambling to the top of one of the rocks, where they re-

mained some days before any boat could approach. At length a pilot-boat from St. Agnes ventured off and took them in, when the boat was upset and almost all in her were drowned, including two of the men who had thus volunteered in the cause of humanity.

Between Scilly and Bryher is an Isle called *Gweäll*, containing about ten acres but uninhabited. To the South-West is a very large rock, called *Castle Bryher*, about sixty feet high; and, near this, an extensive ledge, or low Island, called *Inaswittick*. About half a mile to the South is *Mincarlo*, an islet containing about twelve acres. Rather more than half a mile East-South-East of Mincarlo, and close to Samson, is another *White Island*,<sup>b</sup> consisting of seven or eight acres.

Various rocks and ledges stud the intervals between these isles, and add to the diversity of the scene. The principal of these are *Maiden Bower*, *Black Rock*, *Seal Rock*, *Great* and *Little Minalto*, and some others of less fanciful denomination. In the channels between these rocks and isles, the depth of water is from three to seven fathoms.—in one place only does it reach to ten; but immediately outside, towards the sea, it extends to twenty or thirty

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<sup>b</sup> See an account of the larger White Island, in the division belonging to St. Martin's; Part II. chap. ii.

fathoms.—The passage between Samson and St. Agnes is called the *Broad Sound*, but its numerous ledges render it unsafe, except to skilful pilots. The distance between the two last mentioned Islands is above two miles.

## CHAPTER V.

### ST. AGNES ISLAND.

*Bearings and Distance of St. Agnes from the nearest Islands.—Dimensions and Population.—Excellent State of the Light House.—Singular Proposal for Signals at Scilly.—The Church.—Pleasing Anecdote of the Inhabitants.—The Pond.—Burnt Island.—St. Wara's Well.—Pericles Bay.—The Isthmus.—Fishing Cove.—Porth Conger.—The Gugh.—Inconveniences of Landing on St. Agnes.—Rats brought here by a Ship.—ANNET ISLAND.—The Western Rocks.—Conclusion.*

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**O**N the South-West side of St. Mary's,—from which it is separated by St. Mary's Sound,—and distant about one mile and a half from the Garrison, lies ST. AGNES, the most remote and exposed of the Scilly Islands. It lies in a line due South of Bryher and Samson, and is distant from the latter about two miles and a half. The channel between them is called the Broad Sound.

St. Agnes may peculiarly be called *the region of rocks*. It is not only surrounded by rocks and ledges on every side next the sea, but the whole coast is little else than a mass of rugged and almost inaccessible granite blocks, worn into various singular forms by the change of seasons, and connected with the different points or headlands by necks of stones, shattered from the adjacent shores, and aggrouped in wild confusion, by the violence of oft-recurring storms. Yet the land within is the best cultivated, and consequently most fertile, of any in the Islands.

The outline of St. Agnes is very irregular. Following the indentions of the bays and the protrusions of the headlands, the circuit of its coast (exclusive of the Gugh) is about four miles and a half. It may be sufficient to state that its extreme length is about one mile, and its average breadth half a mile. It contains three hundred acres, sixty houses and two hundred and eighty two inhabitants. The *Gugh* (or *Gugh Island*, as it is called by some) lies on the North-East side of St. Agnes, with which it is connected by a sandy isthmus, passable at low water, and forming two large bays. The Gugh is three quarters of a mile long, and one quarter of a mile broad; but it is stony and uncultivated.

St. Agnes must necessarily be an object of peculiar interest to seamen from the *Light*

*House* erected on it, which nightly displays its vivid ray over the waves of the Atlantic. This substantial, useful, and ornamental building stands on the highest part of the Island, which, however, is not more than fifty feet above the level of the sea. The Light House is of a circular form, the circumference at the base being one hundred feet, and gradually tapering towards the top to sixty four feet. The building is of stone, and the walls are six feet thick at the bottom, and three at the top. The height of the tower is fifty two feet, and the lantern by which it is surmounted is twenty feet high. This lantern is wholly composed of glass and wood, but secured on the outside by iron supporters. Each pane is two feet and a half long, two feet wide, and one quarter of an inch thick. The following account of the machinery within may not be unacceptable to the curious.

In the centre of the lantern is a large kind of circular box, covered with sheet copper, as is the whole of the floor. From the centre of this box arises a pole or shaft of iron, supporting a frame work of a triangular shape on its surface, and consequently displaying three sides to the spectator. To each of these sides are fixed ten parabolic reflectors, of copper, plated with silver; each about eighteen inches in diameter, and seven in concavity. These,

—which are cleaned every day,—are highly polished, and beautifully bright. Before each reflector is fixed an Argand lamp. These ten lamps and reflectors are fixed in three horizontal lines or rows, there being three at the top, four in the middle row, and three at the bottom: In the whole, thirty. Soon after sunset all the lamps are lighted. By turning a screw, the wheels in the box are set in motion, and that motion is continued through the night by the strain of ropes, weights, and pulleys, (like those of a clock) descending to a lower floor. The revolution of the triangular frame is performed in one minute and a half: Thus, in every half minute there is a display of the waxing, the full, and the waning appearance of one side, or face, of the frame, continually sweeping the horizon. These transitions are so regular, and strongly marked, as, seen on the neighbouring Islands, have the most beautiful and interesting effect, especially in a dark night. It is but justice to the present light-keepers to say, that every part of the Light House is kept in the most clean and perfect order, and shewn to strangers with great attention.\*

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\* Such is the splendour of the light that it frequently attracts a great number of birds, which, darting violently against the lantern, fall, stunned or lifeless, in the gallery which surrounds it.

There are proper pipes and ventilators for conveying away the smoke and letting in the air to the light-room.

On the outside of the lantern is a gallery, six feet and a half wide, surrounded by high iron railing, affording a view of the whole island, and of the surrounding rocks and sea, to a great extent.

The outer part of the Light House being repaired and white-washed every year, the building is almost as serviceable by day as by night, being a conspicuous mark for all ships coming from the Southward.

The present Light House was erected in the year 1680, by Captains Hugh Till and Simon Bayley, at the expence of the Corporation of the Trinity House; and, according to Troutbeck, "had an early reputation of being very useful to navigation." Formerly, however, the light was emitted by coals, laid on in large quantities, and rendered more glaring and ruddy by being frequently stirred; although Heath more than insinuates that sometimes the fire was never kindled, or was suffered to decay before the night was out. I know not at what time lamps were first used here, but the present rotatory motion of the lights was the invention of the late ingenious Mr. Adam Walker, lecturer in natural and experimental philosophy, who personally superintended the



erection of the whole machinery, which was completed in the year 1790.<sup>b</sup>

It is a happy thing for the inhabitants of St. Mary's, and indeed of all the Scilly Islands, that the light at St. Agnes has long been in such perfection as to afford them no reason to fear that any future application will be made to Parliament to supply its deficiency in such a manner as was proposed by the late Mr. Whiston, and which, had it been acceded to, must have driven all the people from Scilly in search of a place where they might enjoy *one night's rest*, at least, in their lives, of which they would have been utterly debarred by his invention. In a proposal presented to Parliament by Whiston, in 1716, it was suggested, "that a ball of light or fire" should "be thrown up from St. Mary's *every midnight, and three times more every night*;"—and that "the mortar and ball" should be such as might "afford *light* above a degree of a great circle, or sixty geographical miles; and the *sound* heard *above one third* of the same distance"!!!—This would be "*braying* in a mortar" indeed!

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<sup>b</sup> This active and able man died at Richmond, in Feb. 1821, at the age of eighty eight years. The *Eidouranion*, the *Celestina*, the Warm-Air Stoves, the revolving light on the Isle of Cromer, and several scientific publications, attest the utility of his labours. *Requiescat in pace!*

There are two light-keepers on St. Agnes, who have salaries of £ 100 per annum each, and houses and gardens adjoining the Light House, besides some smaller advantages.\*

The houses on St. Agnes are not erected near one spot, as in the other Island-Towns, but are scattered over the Isle according to the taste or convenience of the inhabitants. They are built of stone, and covered with

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\* Notwithstanding the excellent measures which are adopted to render the Light of St. Agnes extensively beneficial,—there is one cause, and that not of unfrequent occurrence, by which all those measures may, for a while, be rendered fruitless;—I mean, the prevalence of thick foggy weather. Such weather has ever been productive of apprehension to mariners, especially when near land: And in such weather it was (to give a very recent instance or two by way of illustration) that the Spanish brig *Providencia*, and the English schooner York, were totally wrecked, within half a mile of St. Agnes;—the former in 1821, and the latter in 1822. In order, therefore, to provide a *succedaneum* for sight thus obstructed, it appears desirable that recourse should be had to *sound*; or, to speak more plainly, that, near every Light-house, a set of three large bells should be provided (to be rung by a mechanical contrivance) which should be employed by day or night during the continuance of hazy and gloomy weather.\*

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\* A proposal of this kind was made by the Author, to the Secretary of the Corporation of the Trinity House, soon after the loss of the Spanish brig before mentioned; of which, however, no notice appears to have been taken!

thatch, but are remarked as being more clean in the interior than those on any other Island.

A little to the Westward of the Light House is *St. Agnes Church*; a brief account of which, as well as of the religious edifices which have preceded it on this Island, may not be deemed uninteresting.

In Leland's time there was a chapel on *St. Agnes*, dedicated to the Saint from whom the Island derives its name; but it is not certain when it was erected or demolished. Troutbeck says, "it is handed down by tradition that the old Church was beaten down by the Parliament forces, and that it lay in ruins many years; and a dwelling-house was built upon the spot with the materials. Several people now living," he adds, "can remember the arch standing which was between the nave of the Church and the chancel, built with fine free stone in the same manner as the arches in the ruins of the Abbey Church at Tresco. The dwelling-house," he continues, "which was built with the materials of the old Church, and upon the spot where it stood, was washed away, as well as great part of the burial-ground, with a high tide in the year 1744,\* so no remains of it are now to be seen."

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\* It was in that year, and probably at the same time, that Hugh Town, at *St. Mary's*, was overflowed, by the

In 1685, the inhabitants of St. Agnes having received a considerable sum for the salvage of a French vessel that had been driven amongst the rocks; agreed, with a degree of piety and prudence that did equal honour to their heads and hearts, to apply the money in the erection of a new Church. This was accomplished; and the Church, so built, was newly roofed and otherwise repaired by the Islanders, in 1760;—the duty (except marrying and christening) having been wholly performed by a succession of fishermen, until the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge established a Missionary on Tresco, for the purpose of attending to the spiritual wants of all the Off-Islanders.

Subsequently it was deemed expedient by the Society, to appoint another Missionary to the exclusive charge of St. Agnes and St. Martin's; leaving Tresco and Bryher to the care of the clergyman established on the former Island.—A few years since the old Church on St. Agnes was found to be in so great a state of decay, and so much too small for the increased population of the place, that it was judged necessary to take it down and erect another of larger dimensions. Subscrip-

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sea breaking over the banks of Porth Cressa; as hath already been mentioned in the account of that Island.

tions for this purpose were raised in various parts of England, but of their amount no certain information can now be obtained. The Islanders contributed their manual labour, and even their pecuniary mites, with the greatest alacrity; and the building (though unfinished) was opened for public worship about five years since. It suffered much, however, from the state in which it was left; and almost daily sustained such injuries from the weather, as threatened to render it, in a short time, unfit for use. On my arrival here, I found that the North wall had started from the West end in one long fissure; extending from the top to the bottom. There were several leaks in the roof, which is of pantiles; and there was neither pulpit, altar, nor font. The space designed for the chancel was occupied with mortar and other materials purchased for the building, but never employed! The aperture for a window at the East end was roughly boarded up, and the frames were laid on some beams overhead, the Islanders being utterly unable to pay for glazing them. There was a tower at the West end of the Church, but it had neither floors, stairs, windows, or pinnacles: The crazy small bell was suspended by two sticks placed cross-wise, and serving as a roost for numerous birds, whose moulted feathers covered the space below.—By its

shrill, clamorous, and plaintive sound when rung—(for the bells of the Islands are never tolled!)—it seemed to bewail the wretched state of the building to which it was attached.

Neither was the Church more distinguishable for its internal accommodations;—eleven large pews, ranged so as to form two aisles, were all the advantages it had to boast for a population of near three hundred souls! most of whom are remarkable for the regularity and punctuality of their attendance on Divine Service.

Having failed in my first application to the Society for Promoting the Enlargement and Building of Churches and Chapels (through an inadequate census of the population, with which I had been furnished) I was not a little gratified by the exertions of the Islanders, who, at their own labour and charges, took down the fractured wall, and rebuilt it in a substantial manner. At my own expence, therefore, I improved the chancel, and put in a window at the East end, corresponding with those in the body of the Church. A grant of Fifty Pounds having been subsequently obtained from the above Society, and some other little aid procured, the interior of the building has been fitted up in a decent style: A suitable altar, pulpit, and desks, have been erected and neatly painted; and a gallery, capable of accommodating above seventy people, has been

constructed at the West end, and two additional large pews in the Church. I regret, however, to add, that through the smallness of the above grant, and the unsuccessfulness of my attempts to procure private contributions in Cornwall, the roof and tower are still in a very unpleasant state, tending swiftly to decay.

St. Agnes Church, including the chancel (which is of diminished height and breadth) is forty five feet long; thirty five broad; and fifteen feet high;—but this height is apparently much increased on the inside, the roof (which is lofty) being plastered against the pin. It is the most light and airy Church in Scilly, having five large windows (8 feet by 5 feet 8 inches) and four smaller ones. Four of these were given by the Corporation of the Trinity House. The principal entrance is through the tower, but there is a smaller one on the South side. The aisles are of lime ash, like all the other Off-Island Churches. There is a little cemetery, with a few head-stones, around the building.

Somewhat less than a quarter of a mile to the North-East of the Church, on a low neck of stones and sand diverging on each side to the sea, which is not above thirty yards distant, is a large circular pond of fresh water, five hundred and twenty yards in circumference,

and from six to twelve feet in depth in the middle, according to the season of the year. This water is used by most of the inhabitants, and is also convenient for the cattle and poultry.—It is pretty plentifully stocked with eels.—When the water is rendered brackish by the spray of the sea, or by the overflowing of high tides, (which frequently happens) the islanders open a channel through the stony and sandy bank, and let the whole of the water run off. The channel is then closed, and the bason is soon filled again. The existence of a subterraneous fresh-water spring, so copious, and so near the sea, may justly be considered a matter of wonder and speculation.—There are no hills near the pond by which it might be supplied with streams. Its margin is of sand, on the outside of which are stones and rocks, where even black cattle and sheep come down to feed on the sea-weed cast up by the tide.\*

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\* May not the sea itself, in addition to the spring or springs of fresh water, contribute to the speedy replenishment of this pond after its being drained, by oozing through the banks which surround it? It is a well known fact that, at Botallack Mine, near the Land's End,—the workings of which extend a considerable way under the bed of the ocean,—the water, which in some places filters through, is by that means deprived of a great proportion of its salts.



Troutbeck says, "between this Pool and the Light House, within the last forty years, were several fine fields, now entirely useless, by means of the sand being blown over them, which are now open to the common." Some of the oldest inhabitants of the Island have assured me that in their recollection the space now covered by the pond itself, as well as the surrounding sandy plain, was meadow land.—The remains of a hedge, running across the centre of the pond, may still be seen when the water is low.

At a little distance from the pond, inland, is a well of very good water, which is never dry; and which (like the wells at Bryher) rises and falls according to the flowing or ebbing of the sea.

The low rocky neck on which the Pool is situated, has three rugged carns on it, and one at its extremity, called *Burnt Island*, which is surrounded by the sea at high water. Indeed most of those small *Islands*, as they are called, which lie near the larger Isles, are only the extremities of peninsulæ at low tides.

On the South-West side of St. Agnes is *Sancta Warna Bay*, and on the shore was formerly a little *Well*, dedicated to the same saint, who was considered by the ancient inhabitants of the Island as their benefactress, by sending wrecks on shore, and presiding

over their fortune when at sea. They had a tradition that the saint came over from Ireland in a *corracle* (a boat made of wicker work, and covered with raw hides<sup>1</sup>) and landed in the bay which still bears her name, but in what century this voyage was made, or who St. Warna was, I have been unable to discover. Heath says, "in honour and gratitude" to this saint, "several of the inhabitants pay their annual devotions at the place," (*i. e.* the well) "on the day after Twelfth Day, cleaning it out, and using certain superstitious ceremonies in their thanksgiving; which being ended, they make a general feasting and rejoicing throughout the Island." Troutbeck uses Heath's words, but in the past time, as if the practice had utterly fallen into disuse when he wrote; yet many aged people of the Island remember an annual rejoicing day in honour of the saint, which was celebrated by a discharge of fire-arms over the Well, and such other expressions of joy as the means of the Islanders afforded.—Water is still to be obtained from this shallow well as often as it is cleaned out.

There are several grotesque carns, or natural piles of rock, on St. Agnes, but an enumeration of their names (which are mostly

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<sup>1</sup> See Part I. chap. ii.

modern, and either insignificant or puerile) would afford but little information, and less pleasure, to the reader.

Dr. Borlase describes a logan stone on this island, of extraordinary height and magnitude being forty seven feet in circumference, and eight feet six inches in height, and which might easily be put in motion by being touched with a pole from below. The bottom of the logan (or *logging*) rock, being nearly globular, is supposed by the Doctor to have been rounded by art, if not placed by art on the rock that still supports it.

Having been for a long time desirous of seeing one of those masses whose admirable poise, whether fortuitous or scientific, may justly excite sensations of awe; I endeavoured, by the Doctor's description, to find this moving wonder,—but its principal attraction,—the power of being acted upon by a slight momentum,—had ceased to be. The rock to which Dr. Borlase alludes, stands on Wingletang Downs, near the Southern extremity of the Island, and is called by the modern race of Islanders, the *Giant's Punch Bowl!* It consists of three masses of rock. The lower mass does not project above one foot from the ground. On this stands an immense block, about fifty four feet in circumference and about eleven feet high from its subface,

which does not press on the lower mass with more than half its breadth, — a very large chasm having been formed all round by the weather. This block is crowned by the Bowl, which is a large rock of the shape and dimensions stated by Borlase, and having a cavity or bason on the top capable of containing a hogshead of water, and which has no outlet. The Bowl rests partly in a concavity of the larger block, and partly on a rugged protuberance branching from it, against which it seems to have been cast by storms. It presses neither of these points by a space of one foot, and its oscillatory powers might probably be easily restored by removing a little of the protuberance above noticed. The height of the top of the Bowl, from the ground, is twenty feet.

On the North side of the Church is a rocky inlet called *Pericles Bay*. This denomination of itself would go far to settle the point of the original commerce of the Island. At present, however, this bay is generally known by the name of Porth Nicholas, or the still more barbarous,—though not equally distant,—corruption, of *Prigless!*

The neck of sand which connects St. Agnes with the Gugh, is subject to be shifted by high tides and violent seas, after the recess of which it sometimes appears nearly level, and at others, it is heaped up like the top of a

waggon. The bay on the South side of this neck is called *the Cove*, at the entrance of which are seven fathoms of water; but this depth diminishes rapidly inwards to one fathom. Considerable quantities of ling and other fish are caught here, but the inhabitants of St. Agnes are only allowed to fish *in turn* with those of the other Islands who attend here in succession for that purpose.

The Northern bay between the Gugh and St. Agnes is called *Porth Conger*, the water of which is shallow. On the Island side is the Preventive watch-house, below which is a landing-place, of very indifferent accommodations, terminated by an ascent of very steep acclivity. The Corporation of the Trinity House offered a grant of one hundred pounds, a few years since, towards the erection of a quay here, which would have been a great advantage as well to His Majesty's Service as to the natives of Scilly in general. But that sum being utterly inadequate to remunerate the time and labour required, the proposal was abandoned; and the visitants of St. Agnes must continue to scramble over its sedgy rocks in the best manner they can!

In the cliff, on the Western side of Porth Conger, is a fine running stream of fresh water,—the only one in St. Agnes; and which supplies most of the inhabitants of this part of the Island.

The *Gugh* contains nothing particularly deserving notice. It is uncultivated, and affords a miserable pasture to a few straggling sheep. Yet the remains of hedges, and several burrows, seem to indicate that it was not always thus neglected. The different summits of its ridging back are topped by some remarkable hoary carns.

Opposite the North-West extremity of the Gugh is a large and terrific rock called the *Cow*; and between this rock and the land, is a smaller one, called the *Calf*, the brown head of which is scarcely visible at high water. The channel between these rocks and St. Agnes is very deep, and the general agitation of the sea, great. Hence the necessity of the quay, before mentioned.

One bay in St. Agnes, named *Porth Killier*, deserves notice from the following circumstance, which is mentioned on the authority of Troutbeck. A very large ship, belonging to Shields, and bound to Liverpool, was stranded here in a gale, but the crew were all saved, and the vessel was subsequently got off. "There was not a rat upon the Island before this accident," says my author, "but now these creatures are numerous." It was probably in some such manner that other islands, far remote from any continent, were first replenished with different species of animals,

the existence of which, in such situations, has occasioned so much speculation amongst naturalists.

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About a quarter of a mile to the Westward of St. Agnes, is the low and desolate isle of ANNET (or Agnet) containing about fifty acres.<sup>5</sup> Seen from St Mary's it appears joined to St. Agnes, and is terminated on the West by four large, distinct, cone-like rocks, called *Annet Head*. Annet is uncultivated, but is used for pasturing cattle, and is occasionally visited by *pic-nic* parties from St. Mary's, for the purpose of shooting rabbits, &c.

The "remains of hedges" and "foundations of houses," not only on the Isle but in the sand on the shore, which is covered at high water, are mentioned by Troutbeck, to shew that Annet was formerly inhabited, or at least cultivated; and that it must have suffered much from the encroachments of the sea, to which it is peculiarly exposed. There are certainly no vestiges of hedges on the Island at present, nor could I trace any thing that

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<sup>5</sup> Troutbeck strangely errs in computing the number of acres on this Island at *ninety*. Heath reckons it only *forty*.

bore the slightest resemblance to the foundations of houses, neither is there any thing to induce a belief that the Isle was ever populated or cultivated, although some parts of the soil are good, and the whole might be advantageously occupied by three or four resident families. The whole Island is used by the people of St. Agnes for pasturing cattle. There are many rabbits on Annet, and the sea-birds come here in great plenty to deposit their eggs on the open ground.—There is a singular chasm in the North-East end of the Island, called *Lake Anthown*, about forty yards long, from three to four wide, and seven deep, as far as it has been traced. The rocks around are black, like those near the chasms of White Island and Teän. Troutbeck says, this is supposed to have been an old *iron* mine.—There are several carns and rock-basons on Annet, but none deserving particular notice.

Nearly North-West of St. Agnes, and North-East of Annet, are two large rocks, surrounded by several smaller ones, called *Great* and *Little Smith*. The channel between these rocks and Annet is called *Smith's Sound*, which (notwithstanding it has from eight to twelve fathoms of water) is narrow and dangerous, and not to be ventured on but by a skilful pilot.



To the Southward and Westward of St. Agnes and Annet, *the Rocks of Scilly*, properly so called,—or, as they are here denominated, *the Western Rocks*,—the source of so many naval disasters,—stretch away in every diversity of shape, size, and danger, to an extent of nearly five miles. The principal of these, in magnitude, (but not, therefore, the most dangerous) are *Melledgan*, about half a mile in circumference; *Goreggan*, of nearly the same dimensions; *Rosevear*; *Rosevean*; *Crebawithen*, near three quarters of a mile round; *Camperdeny*, *Pednathise*, &c. &c. The sea between and around them is thickly studded with rocks and ledges, of melancholy celebrity in the annals of shipwreck. Even when viewed amidst the stillness of a Summer's sea, a "grim repose" seems to hang around them, and the mind painfully reverts to the long catalogue of distressing casualties to which they have given rise:

"Again the dismal prospect opens round,—

"The wreck, the shores, the dying, and the drowned;"

but, seen amidst the terrors of a Winter's storm,—with the sky frowning above, and the maddened ocean howling below, while the white foam flies with lightning-like precipitancy up their rugged sides, and expands in showers of spray over their moss-fringed tops,

—curiosity gives place to painful apprehension;—the remembrance of past calamities opens the way to melancholy anticipation;—and, while the eye glances over the wide-spread and dark-rolling sea, the heart involuntarily ejaculates,

“ My God, have mercy on the mariner ! ”

It is, however, a source of no small consolation to reflect that, through the attention which has so long been bestowed on the Light of Scilly;—through the recent improvements in the Hydrography of this part of the Empire;—and, above all, through the mercy of a beneficent and ever-watchful Providence; much of the terror which formerly hung around these Isles is dissipated; much of the uncertainty that once counteracted the energy of the seaman, is removed; and that, though the feelings of sympathy may be sometimes excited for individual suffering, no extensive calamity has now marked this once-dreaded spot, for a series of several years.

In conclusion I may be allowed to observe that, if the different improvements suggested in the foregoing sheets should ever be adopted, the safety of vessels putting into the Roads or Harbours will be greatly assured,—the advantage of the warlike and mercantile departments will be promoted,—and the prosperity

of the Scilly Islands will be permanently established: Whilst, on the contrary, neglect of these measures will lead to further and still greater evils than have yet occurred, and those evils will derive their finishing shades of magnitude, from being then altogether irremediable.

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End of Part II.

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J. CARTHEW,  
Literary and Commercial Press, Truro.

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